ENTERTAINMENT / F6

No formal announcement necessary for Ogie-Regine romance

SPORTS / A31

Iran gives RP five rude welcome in Fiba Asia Champs Cup

BUSINESS / B1

RP tourism on fastest rise in decade; 'next big thing' for investors

ENTERTAINMENT / F1

Kuh Ledesma's daughter Isabella tells the world: I'm bipolar

What's in a name: Alan Cayetano's nightmare

By Norman Bordadora, Kristine L. Alave and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ELECTION INSPECTORS IN OBANDO, BULACAN, voided votes for "Alan Cayetano" after an election supervisor went around the precincts in the town telling the Boards of Election Inspectors that it was he—not Joselito Pepito Cayetano—who had been disqualified.

WHAT'S/ A23

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, May 15, 2007 ★★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 156 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

10 dead on Election Day, including 3 in Masbate

By Alcuin Papa, Tarra Quismundo and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Inquirer Bureaus

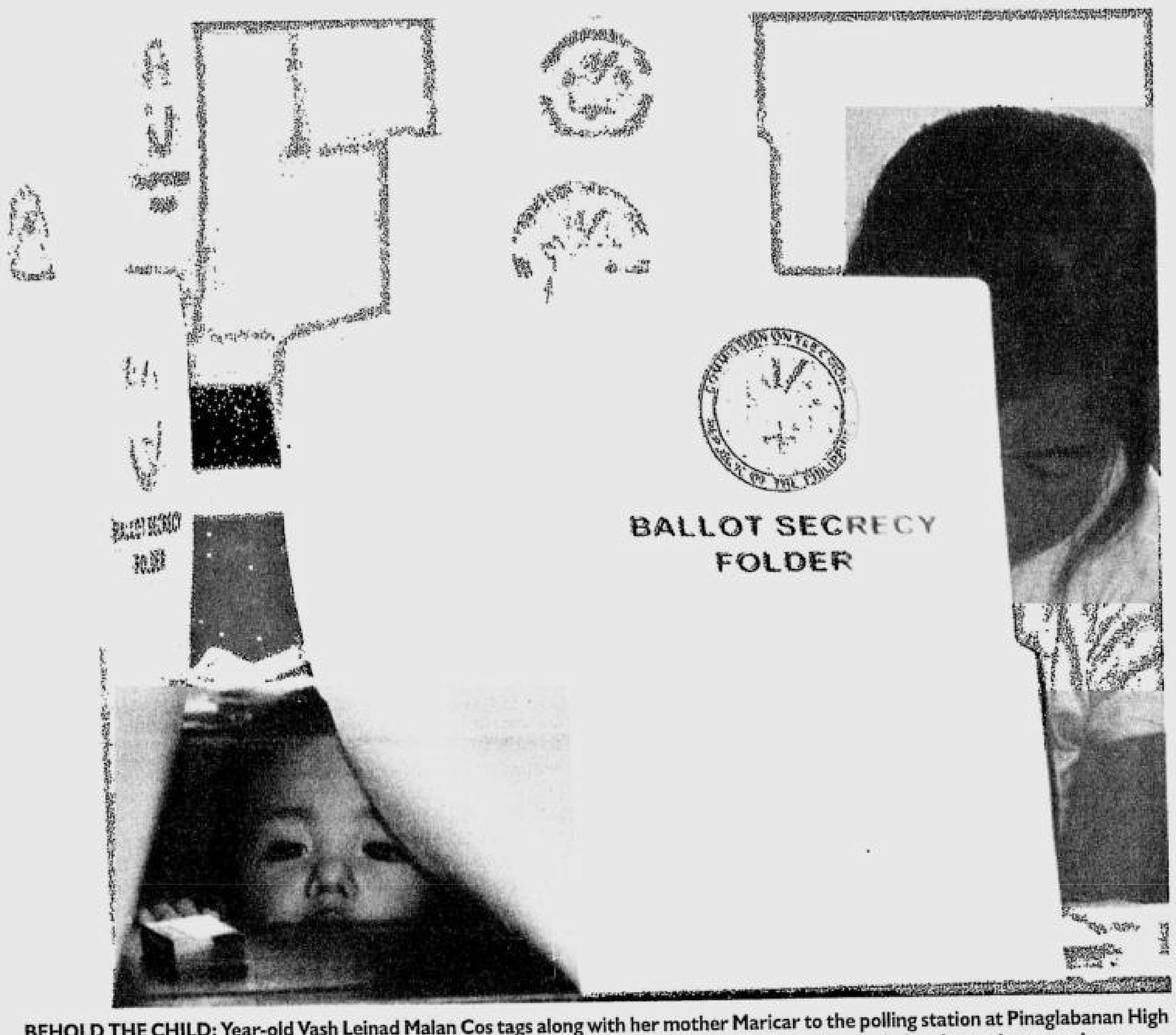
THE PISTOL-SHAPED ISLAND OF MASBATE lived up to its billing as one of the nation's election hot spots, accounting for three people slain in the balloting yesterday.

In other election-related incidents yesterday, two men were gunned down in the politically

10 DEAD/ A11

Thugs halt polls in 14 towns

Lanao votes involved crucial to last Senate slots



BEHOLD THE CHILD: Year-old Vash Leinad Malan Cos tags along with her mother Maricar to the polling station at Pinaglabanan High School in San Juan, Metro Manila. Which reminds that we exercise our right to vote with heart and mind and conscience to give our children the future that they deserve and reaffirm our faith in democracy as a way of life for generations to come. BOY CABRIDO

By Inquirer Mindanao and Nikko Dizon *in Manila*

COTABATO CITY—THE threats came through text messages warning election officers of bomb attacks if they showed up at the polling precincts. In some cases, the threats were more blatant—armed men showed up outside their homes.

As a result, election officials yesterday stayed away from the polls, causing the postponement of voting in 10 towns in Lanao del Sur.

Elections were also postponed in three other towns of Lanao del Sur because of politicians' objections to the composition of the election inspectors board, the Commision on Elections (Comelec) said.

In Barira town in Shariff Kabunsuan, elections were postponed after female supporters of reelectionist Mayor Alex Tomawis allegedly sat on the ballot boxes, officials said.

The 14 towns account for a total of more than 100,000 voters—a sizeable enough figure which the Commission on Elections said could be crucial in deciding the last slots in the race for 12 Senate seats.

The incidents added a new chapter to the history of Mindanao as a region where some of the dirtiest elections in the country had occurred.

Lanao del Sur was also one of the provinces mentioned in the "Hello Garci" scandal involving alleged vote-rigging by former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in 2004 to help President

THUGS/ A10

ELEKSYON 2007

AMA TALLY

4,162 precincts out of 308,222 precincts
As of 11:29 p.m. May 14, 2007

	Senators	Votes
1	Escudero, Francis A (GO)	333,594
2	Legarda, Loren (GO)	306,476
3	Aquino, Benigno III C (GO)	289,756
4	Lacson, Panfilo M (GO)	281,394
5	Pangilinan, Francis N (Ind)	263,952
6	Villar, Manuel Bamba Jr (GO)	263,309
7	Arroyo, Joker P (TU)	234,350
8	Cayetano, Alan Peter P (GO)	230,903
9	Angara, Edgardo J (TU)	211,044
10	Honasan, Gregorio B (Ind)	200,273
11	Trillanes, Antonio IV F (GO)	193,994
12	Pimentel, Aquilino DL (GO)	190,952
13	Recto, Ralph G (TU)	177,060
14	Zubiri, Juan Miguel F (TU)	174,701
15	Defensor, Michael T (TU)	165,939
16	Roco, Sonia M (GO)	162,406
17	Pichay, Prospero Jr A (TU)	133,930
18	Sotto, Vicente III C (TU)	119,126
19	Osmeña, John Henry C (GO)	117,660
20	Coseteng, Nikki (GO)	103,343
21	Montano,Cesar M. (TU)	95,290
22	Magsaysay, Vicente P (TU)	86,619
23	Oreta, Teresa Tao A (TU)	58,217
24	Singson, Luis C (TU)	56,341
25	Gomez, Richard I (Ind)	55,543
26	Kiram, Jamalui III D (TU)	35,332
27	Paredes, Jess (Kapatiran)	23,976
28	Bautista, Martin D (Kapatiran)	22,515
29	Sison, Adrian O (Kapatiran)	17,004
30	Cayetano, Joselito P (KBL)	13,906
31	Chavez, Melchor G (KBL)	13,275
32	Lozano, Oliver O (KBL)	13,148
33	Enciso, Ruben C (KBL)	9,018
34	Orpilla, Eduardo F (KBL)	8,941
35	Estrella, Antonio L (KBL)	8,826
36	Wood, Victor (KBL)	8,425
37	Cantal, Felix C (PGRP)	6,866

GO bets take early 8-2-2 lead

THE GENUINE OPPOSITION took an early lead last night with eight of its senatorial candidates making it to the Magic 12, according to partial and unofficial results of a quick count conducted by a private computer school.

Only two of the administration's Team Unity candidates and two independents landed in the winning circle.

As of 11:29 p.m., results of the unofficial quick count conducted by the AMA Education System showed that the leading GO senatorial candidates were Francis Escudero, Loren Legarda, Benigno Aquino III, Panfilo Lacson, Manuel Villar Jr., Alan Peter Cayetano, Antonio Trillanes IV and Aquilino Pimentel III.

TU candidates Joker Arroyo and Edgardo Angara, and independent candidates Francis Pangilinan and Gregorio Honasan made it to the Magic 12.

GO BETS/ A21

Abalos lost, Trillanes cheered, Erap home alone

PATI SI ABALOS NAGULUHAN!

REPORTERS NOTEBOOK

EVEN THE CHAIR OF THE COMmission on Elections, Benjamin Abalos Sr., became hot under the collar when he set out to vote in Mandaluyong City.

Abalos told reporters his own travails as a voter in the course of claiming that "confusion is always expected in the first few hours of the elections."

Aside from failing to bring his voter's ID card and information sheet, the man said he had a difficult time searching for his polling precinct because of the heavy traffic caused by "clueless voters."

"I, for one, knew where my voting precinct was, but locating the precinct was another story," Abalos said in the first of his media briefings yesterday.

Good thing, he said, that volunteers of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) were ready with their own computer-based voters' list and precinct assignments.

Usual complaints

The circulation of a fake Comelec memorandum in Kalinga province, the arrest of poll watchers wearing campaign shirts in Makati City, and the usual complaints of missing names on the voters' list—these, said Abalos, comprised the usual confusion encountered by voters nationwide.

"It's due to excitement... Ev-

ABALOS LOST/ A11

Pampanga priest leads gov race despite black prop

By the Inquirer Bureaus

POLITICAL RIVALS OF FR. EDDIE Panlilio, a Catholic priest running for Pampanga governor, yesterday made a last-ditch bid to destroy his name by publishing a fake front page of the Sun.Star Pampanga newspaper here.

The ploy had no impact on the early unofficial results of the gubernatorial contest tabulated by the AMA Education System. The AMA tabulation, based on fragmentary returns as of 10:30 p.m., showed Panlilio leading with 3,910 votes against Gov. Mark Lapid, who had 3,665 and Board Member Lilia Pineda, wife of suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo Pineda, who had 2,690.

The fake newspaper copy carried two stories. The first reported that Panlilio had supposedly admitted to having children and a wife. The second said the Pampanga Chamber of Commerce and Industry had withdrawn its support for him.

The reporters, whose bylines were used, denied writing the stories.

Levy Laus, one of the daily's owners, said it was a "fake copy."

PAMPANGA/ A21

PPCRV: 39 cases of fraud reported

By Cathy C. Yamsuan

THE MASSIVE DISENFRANchisement of voters in the midterm elections is a strong argument for the computerization of future polls, according to Henrietta de Villa, chair of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting.

De Villa said in a press conference last night that the PPCRV had received a total of 39 reports of "electoral fraud," most of which involved disenfranchisement. She said that even in the early hours of the elections, PPCRV volunteers all over the country were relaying how voters had difficulty finding their precincts.

In other cases, De Villa said, precincts had either been relocat-

PPCRV/ A10

25
408B
409A
MVH-829

OUT OF MINDANAO: A jeep carrying poll workers/ballot boxes in Cotabato City is under heavy guard. Election watchdogs and foreign observers in Mindanao were inundated with reports that many of the Comelec officials allegedly involved in stealing the vote in 2004 were still around and their cheating network in place. AFP

EZ2
(14) (11)

FOUR DIGIT
8 1 8 9

SUERTRES
Mid-Day 0 9 2
Evening 8 8 3
(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45
(5) (8) (16) (37) (44) (45)
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Second FrontPage

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern, Central and the rest of Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. While Mindanao and Eastern Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Mostly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: EDDON SARMIENTO PDI RESEARCH/05/14/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Reports of anomalies flood poll watchdogs

By TJ Burgonio

EVEN BEFORE VOTING PRECINCTS CLOSED yesterday, election watchdogs were being inundated with complaints of disenfranchisement and illegal last-minute campaigning.

Kontra Daya said it received reports from the Order of Carmelites-JPIC that many voters in Sitio Veterans, Barangay Silang, Novaliches, found that they had either been deactivated from the list or their names in the lists had the photos of other people.

It said it also received reports from Joro-Joro, Biñan, Laguna, that at midnight of Sunday, the members of the Board of Election Inspectors were replaced with people loyal to a candidate related to Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos.

Kontra Daya field volunteers also reported that three Bayan Muna community leaders found that their names were missing from the voters' list in Almario Elementary School in Tondo, but they were eventually able to vote after five hours.

"It was a picture of chaos. There was confusion in many areas. The elections have not improved. The same problems persist. The world is watching and all they are seeing are Filipinos unable to freely and properly exercise their right of suffrage," said Kontra Daya convenor Fr. Joe Dizon.

Kontra Daya said the most alarming reports came from Mindanao, with reports of ballot-snatching, violence, failure to conduct elections, and padding of voters' lists.

It said the elections could not be regarded to have been generally peaceful because 128 were killed in the run-up to May 14.

"It is improper for the Philippine National Police to say that the polls were peaceful. It is also too premature tȯ say that the death count will not be much higher during the precinct count and the canvassing of votes," Dizon said.

Meanwhile, members of the People's International Observers Mission (People's IOM) noted "systematic breaches of the election law" in Tondo, Manila.

The People's IOM said its team members—Canadian Stefan Christoff, Burmese Yan Naing and Swiss Bianca Miglioretto—assigned to Isabelo de los Reyes School and Rosario Almario School in Tondo observed that "multiple candidate supporters were distributing sample ballots within the voting centers, just in front of the entrance to the voting centers."

It was clear to the People's IOM Manila team that the "poll watchers" were vocally attempting to influence voters to cast their ballots for the candidates they were supporting at the entrance to polling precincts, Christoff said in a statement.

Also in Tondo, many voters, particularly those from Isla Puting Bato and Parola, complained that their names were missing from the voters' lists even though they had voted there in the May 2004 presidential elections, resulting in people crowding around the polling precincts.

Miglioretto said her team documented more than 100 deactivated voters out of 439 voters at Vicente Lim Elementary School, also in Tondo. Interestingly, the deactivated included both those who voted and failed to vote in 2004.

With Cathy Yamsuan

'Voting over, long wait begins; battle still on'

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE VOTING MAY HAVE ended but the electoral battle is far from over.

At the close of the polls yesterday, Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, the Team Unity campaign strategist and media director, said the long wait had just begun.

"It does not mean that the election process is finished. The counting, tabulation and canvassing are equally critical and important to the voting process," he said.

Evardone, who has sought reelection himself, predicted that because of the manual counting of votes, the winners in the senatorial race may not be officially declared until two or three weeks after the election.

He said he expected the new mayoral, congressional and provincial officials to be declared in four days to a week.

Millions of sample ballots

Evardone said local government officials held up their end of the bargain to work for a 12-0 sweep of administration bets by dutifully distributing millions of sample ballots in the local voting precincts.

He said it was not true that some TU bets had junked their fellow candidates and inserted the names of Genuine Opposition candidates on their sample ballots.

"We're very happy with the governors and mayors for delivering on their promise to push for the entire Team Unity slate," said Evardone.

Despite its senatorial candidates faring poorly in the pre-election surveys, TU remained confident it would win at least seven of the 12 Senate seats largely on the strength of its political machinery. Most administration-backed governors, congressmen and mayors ran unopposed or faced token opponents.

Evardone said he expected a massive sweep of the local posts by Malacañang allies.

"It's a given that the administration's local candidates will dominate [the polls]. The Senate will get a fair share of the mandate of the people," he said.

TU candidates Vicente Sotto III, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto said they received reports that their names were missing from some sample ballots but said they were happy with how the local officials performed.

Few and far between

"If ever there were some changes, I guess these were just few and far between and not something serious to worry about," said Sotto.

Arroyo, who was warned of an attempt to junk him by his own team mates, was satisfied with how the local government officials performed.

Recto said he was happy that at least "90 percent" of the sample ballots carried his name. He said he was aware that Cebu City Mayor Tommy Osmeña 'took his name off the TU sample ballot and replaced it with a GO candidate's.

"You can't win them all. I'm not mad at Osmeña, that's his prerogative. I just made sure that my watchers gave out my sample ballots in Cebu," said Recto.

When darkness fell

Evardone noted that in the past, cheating occurred as soon as the polls closed, or when darkness fell.

"So we should not let our guard down. We should continue to be vigilant because more than the results of the election, it's the credibility of the electoral process that matters. I think everybody recognizes the need to have a credible election," he said.

"It will be a setback for our country and the economy if the elections were marred by massive electoral fraud," he added.

Evardone said the administration will always be suspected of poll cheating because it is the ruling power.

"But both sides can cheat. It does not follow that the administration has the exclusive franchise to cheat. The opposition is also capable [of cheating]. There are many forms of cheating like black propaganda and disinformation," he said.

He said the administration coalition was prepared to guard the ballot boxes through its army of watchers armed with food and flashlights.

The Election Code mandates the continuous counting of votes at the precinct level, tabulation at the provincial level and canvassing at the national level until the winners are declared, "precisely to avoid any room for cheating," he said.

Speedy canvassing of votes

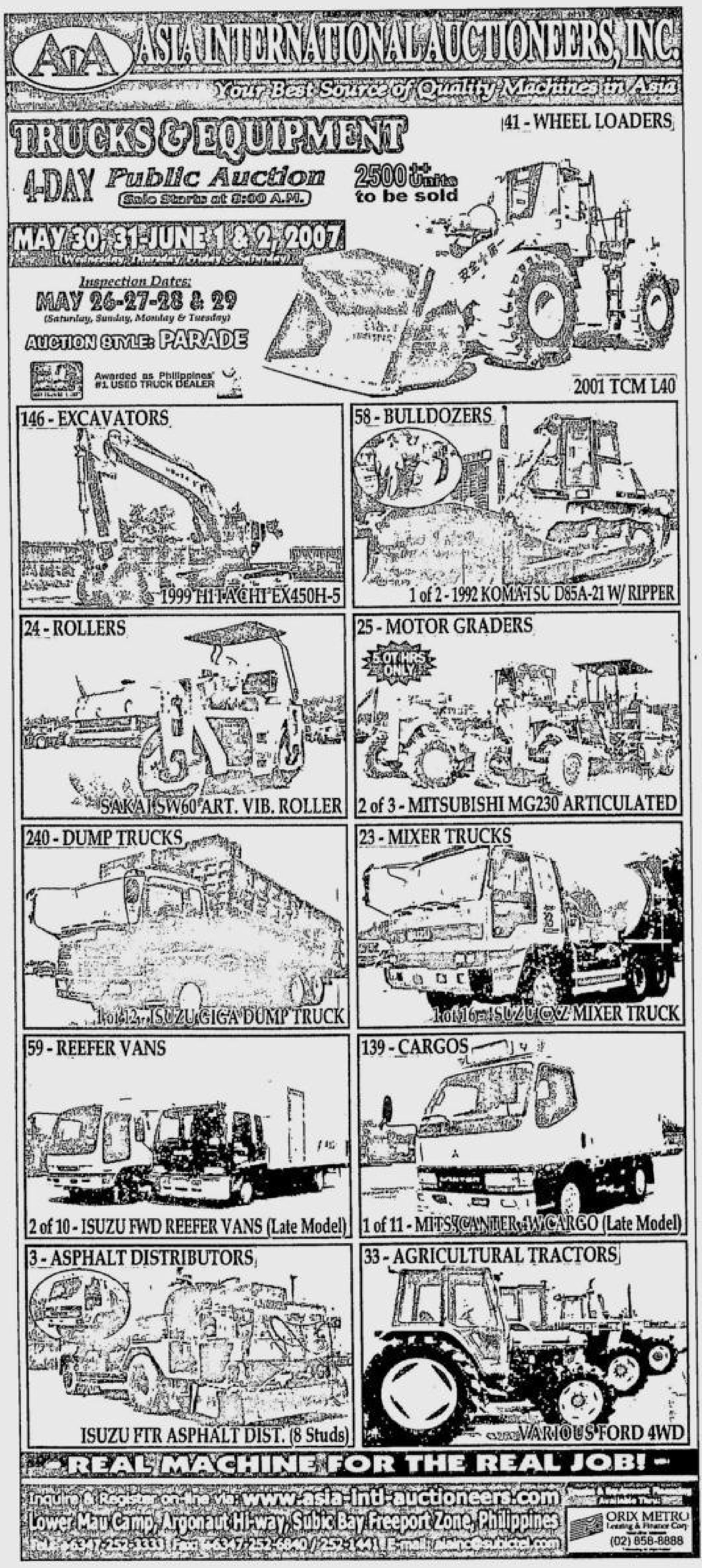
From his Cantilan, Surigao del Sur, hometown where he voted, TU senatorial candidate Rep. Prospero Pichay urged the Comelec to ensure the speedy, efficient and accurate tabulation and canvassing of votes.

"A slow counting of votes can lead to serious allegations of election fraud and disenfranchisement," he said in a statement.

Pichay said a balance must be struck between integrity, accuracy and speed.

"Failure to complete the count and transmit results in a quick, transparent and accurate manner can jeopardize public confidence in the elections and will directly affect whether candidates and political parties accept the final results," he said.

Pichay said there should also be clear limitations on the publication of unofficial results, exit poll results and parallel counts until an official result is announced.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Suspected extremists, coup plotters cast ballots

SUSPECTED ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS AND coup plotters running for office were among the millions who voted in yesterday's Philippine elections, saying their participation was proof of their love for the democracy that authorities say they want to destroy.

Three of the suspected rebels were out on bail or court-approved furlough, while one accused coup plotter was escorted by heavily armed Marines from a military barracks to a suburban Manila school to cast his vote—all trailed by journalists.

"By doing this, I can prove that I'm on the good side," said Dawud Tyrone Santos, a suspected al-Qaida-linked militant who voted in his northern hometown of Anda in Pangasinan.

Santos, 34, has been suspected by police intelligence officials of membership in a group of Islamic converts linked to terrorist groups such as the Abu Sayyaf in the southern Philippines and Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyah.

Santos denied any links to al-Qaida and renounced terrorism. Running for councilor in Anda, he said the stigma brought about by the accusations against him had given him crucial voter recognition.

Nur Misuari, the leader of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) who is being tried for rebellion, was allowed by a court to fly to southern Jolo island to cast his vote. Followers breached a police cordon to shake his hand.

"Count my vote," Misuari, who is running for governor of Sulu, told an elections officer after he turned in his ballot.

The MNLF signed a peace accord with the government in 1996, but many members held on to their arms and were accused of staging a deadly uprising led by Misuari a few years ago.

Suspected coup plotter and opposition senatorial candidate "Gregorio Gringo" Honasan, who is out on bail, also cast his vote.

A fellow suspect in a 2003 failed power grab, fellow opposition senatorial candidate Antonio Trillanes, who is in jail, was escorted by Marines to suburban Malabon in Metro Manila to vote but he was not allowed to talk to the media but was mobbed by followers and photographers.

Another candidate, Agakhan Sharief, is not a suspected insurgent but has drawn attention in southern Lanao del Sur province, where he is running for a seat in the legislative council, because of his campaign nickname—Osama bin Laden.

Sharief sports a foot-long black beard lightly peppered with gray, a turban and a neck scarf similar to that worn by Bin Laden in TV images. But unlike the world's most wanted terror suspect, Sharief is known as a peacemaker because he has helped broker truces between troops and Muslim rebels in the past.

He failed to vote yesterday after balloting in his town was canceled when some election personnel failed to show up due to security concerns. Sharief was unperturbed.

"He wasn't disappointed," said his wife, Sophia. "He has this warm personality, a really cool guy."

AP

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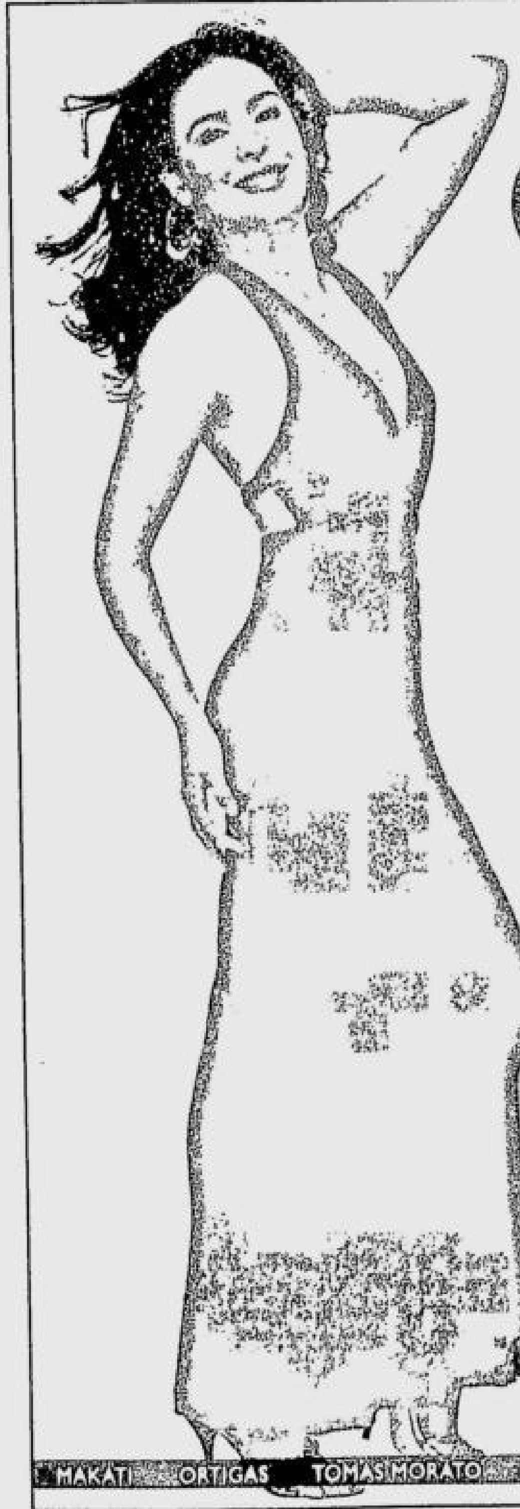

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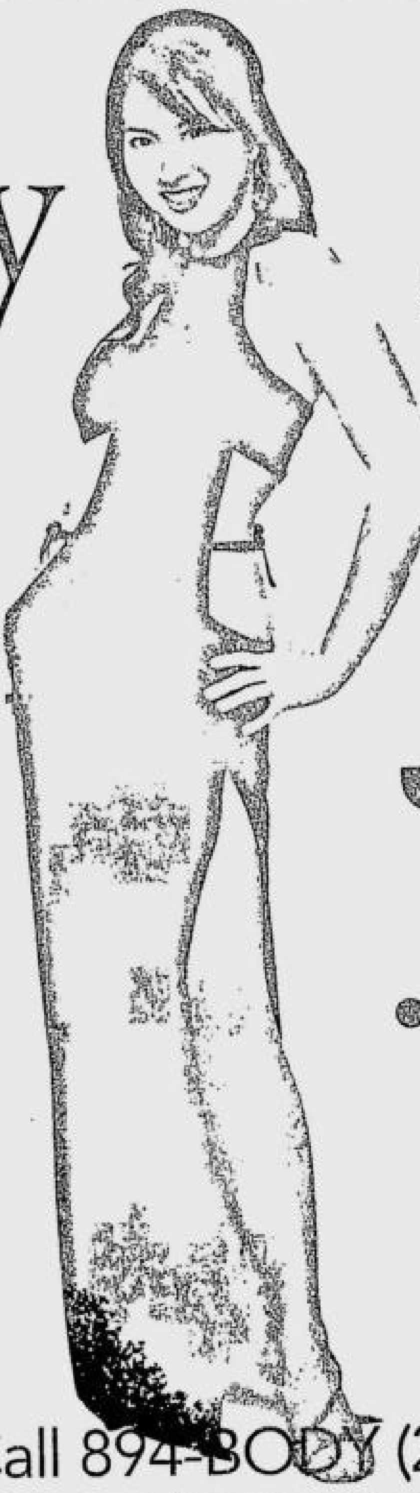
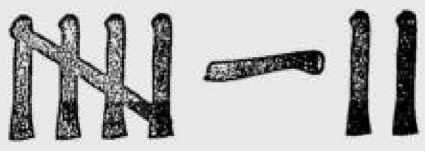


Puede pa ring "mag-magic" kahit nakaboto na tayo at nabilang na sa presinto.

ang 1,382 nagiging 4,382

ang  nagiging 52

ang 2,599 nagiging 12,599

Patuloy nating bantayan ang proseso ng canvassing.

Di lang ang mga presinto sa araw ng halalan ang dapat subaybayan. Sa totoo lang, mas malaking pandaraya ang maaaring mangyari sa loob ng 1 o 2 linggo pagkatapos ng eleksyon, kung kailan nagaganap ang canvassing sa mga munisipyo, lungsod at probinsya. Kaya ang PPCRV, NAMFREL, NASSA at LENTE o Legal Network for Truthful Elections ay nagtutulungan upang siguraduhing tapat sa Election Returns (ERs) ang mga Certificates of Canvass (COCs). Higit sa 10,000 abogado, paralegals at iba pang trained volunteers ang nakahanda sa lahat ng mga canvassing centers para hindi makalusot ang mga anomalya.

Para tumulong sa Bantay Canvass o mag-report kaugnay sa ginagawang bilangan:

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Appeals court junks Boni firm's bid for tax refund

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS REJECTed the plea of Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC), the developer of Global City in Taguig, for a refund of its more than P77-million in value-added tax (VAT) payments for the sale and lease of its properties in the first quarter of 1998.

The appellate court said FBDC could not get a refund since it was not entitled to the tax credit under the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) because when FBDC acquired the Global City lots from the government, it was not subjected to sales or business tax payments.

The tax credit claim was the basis for FBDC's request for a refund.

"Bearing in mind the purpose of the transitional input tax credit under the VAT system, we find it incongruous to grant petitioner's claim for tax refund... Since the seller did not pass on any tax liability to petitioner, the latter may not claim a tax credit. Clearly then, petitioner cannot simply demand that it is entitled to the transitional input tax credit," the appellate court said in its April 30 decision.

It also upheld the resolution of the Court of Tax Appeals stating that allowing FBDC the transitional input tax credit to lessen its VAT liability, when the FBDC did not pay any tax beforehand, would be tantamount to giving it an "outright bonus."

Wrongly collected

FBDC had sought the VAT refund, claiming it was wrongly collected because no transitional or presumptive tax credit on its land inventory was taken into account when it paid the P77 million.

FBDC wanted to avail itself of the transitional input tax credit to ease the burden of the VAT payments to which it was subjected after the Expanded Value-Added Tax Law was passed in 1994.

Under the tax code, the tax credit is equivalent to 8 percent of the beginning inventory of goods, materials or supplies or the actual VAT paid on such items, whichever is higher.

But the Bureau of Internal Revenue did not act on FBDC's claim for a refund, prompting the latter to elevate the case to the Court of Tax Appeals.

The BIR, for its part, pointed out that FBDC acquired the Global City properties VAT-free since the national government did not pass on any VAT or sales tax to it as part of the purchase price.

Only improvements

The BIR said it could not grant the refund because under Revenue Regulation 7-95, which implemented the NIRC, the basis of transitional input tax credits for real estate dealers are only the improvements on the property like buildings, roads, drainage systems and similar structures. It said the cost of the land was not included.

The CTA initially ruled in FBDC's favor, but reversed its decision upon the BIR's motion for reconsideration.

The FBDC then elevated the case to the appellate court.

In ruling against the FBDC, the appellate court also upheld the validity of the BIR's Revenue Regulations 7-95. It said the regulation was not contrary to the tax code as argued by FBDC.

It also junked FBDC's argument that real estate properties for sale to customers fell under the term "goods" which was one of the bases for computing the tax credit. It said "goods" referred to wares and commodities, and did not include land and the structures built upon it.

FBDC is 45 percent owned by the Bases Conversion Development Authority, a government corporation, while the rest is owned by Bonifacio Land Corp.

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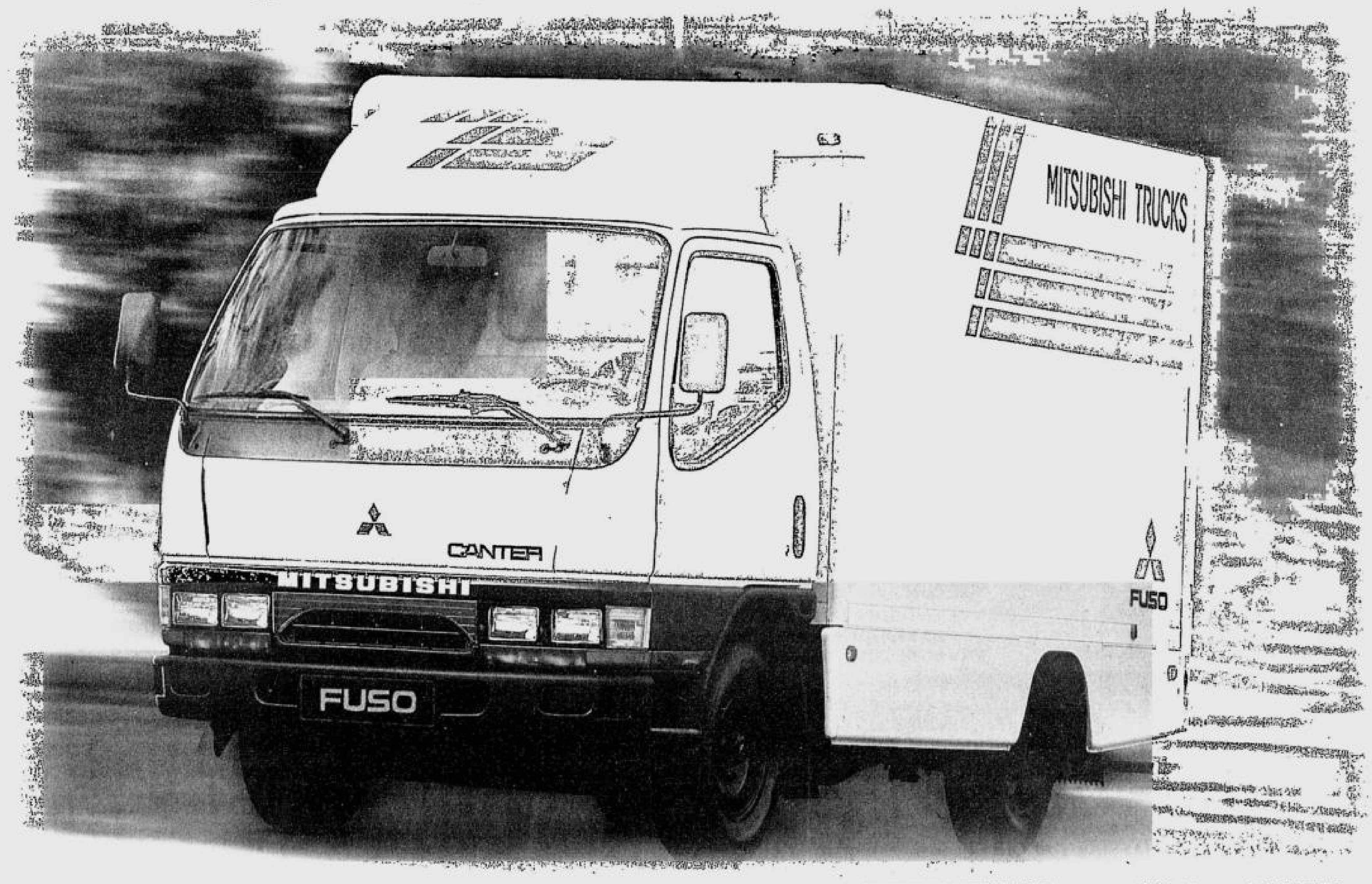

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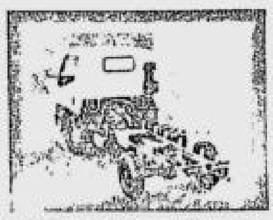

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FUSO

Voter listing system caused confusion

By Volt Contreras and Edson Tandoc Jr.

INDEPENDENT POLL WATCHERS HAVE blamed the allegedly widespread disenfranchisement of voters in Quezon City on the way the Commission on Elections drew up the precinct list of voters for yesterday's polls.

In past elections, they noted, the voters' names were arranged strictly in alphabetical order so that all surnames beginning with "A" in a particular barangay could be found in the first one or two precincts, "B" would be found in the third and fourth precincts, and so on.

This system made it easy to map out the precincts and point the voter to the right polling place, they said.

For this year's poll exercise, however, the Comelec used a method that poll watchers could not decipher up to the end of voting yesterday.

In the new system, every precinct had a full complement of voters' names "from A to Z," so that a voter with no idea where to start looking for his or her name had to scan the lists posted on all the precincts in a particular polling center, usually a school.

"It's a rumble. I don't see any logic in making the lists this way," said Connie Calicdan Hipe, a volunteer of the Parish Pastoral Council on Responsible Voting, who monitored the elections at Barangay San Vicente Elementary School in Diliman, Quezon City.

"Is this another tactic to delay or discourage voting?" Hipe wondered aloud. She said she personally attended to between 20 and 30 voters who, unable to find their names after going from one precinct to another, left in frustration.

The list at San Vicente's Precinct No. 5339-A, for example, started with the voter "Abonita, Ulyssis Alcantara" and ended with the 175th voter "Zapata, Jennylyn Somido."

Several classrooms away, in Precinct No. 5344-A, the first voter on the list was "Abaya, Meriam Namia," while the last, the 166th voter, was "Zapata, Sionida Somido."

The two "Zapatas" on both lists were apparently related and even shared the same address.

In past elections, Hipe said, voters with the same surnames and addresses were normally found in the same precinct. Hence, one member of the family going out to vote ahead of the others could easily point the others in the right direction.

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said the present listing was "a logical consequence of continuing registration" wherein every new voter gets assigned to a precinct "right away," according to his or her geographic location.

It is no longer a case of "waiting for all voters" in one barangay to register, arranging them alphabetically, and then assigning them to new precincts, Jimenez said.

Under the continuing registration program, the list gets "updated every three months" during a hearing of the Election Registration Board and a new precinct is created for every 200 new voters, Jimenez explained.

As to why members of the same household get assigned to different precincts, this would be likely if members registered at different times, he said.

For instance, a grandmother may have registered several years ago and was listed in a particular precinct. Her grandchild, who only registered recently, would therefore likely land in another precinct, Jimenez said.

Many voters who were unable to locate their precincts yesterday probably did not return after they registered to get their precinct number assignments from their local election officials, he said.

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Bloc voting made count easy

THE SO-CALLED Iglesia vote was virtually solid in the precincts inside the New Era compound where members of the Iglesia ni Cristo reside.

Ninety-nine percent of the 3,107 ballots cast in 35 precincts at the New Era Elementary and High Schools in Tandang Sora, Quezon City, listed the Iglesia prescribed 6-5-1 senatorial slate (six administration candidates, five opposition candidates and independent candidate Francis Pangilinan).

Administration Team Unity bets in New Era's top 12 included Edgardo Angara, Ralph Recto, Michael Defensor, Joker Arroyo, Miguel Zubiri and Vicente Sotto III; Genuine Opposition bets were: Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero, Panfilo Lacson, Manuel Villar and Benigno Aquino Jr.

Only one percent voted for other candidates outside the bloc for Aquilino Pimentel III, Richard Gomez, Alan Peter Cayetano, Gregorio Honasan, Antonio Trillanes, Sonia Roco, Sultan Jamalul Kiram, Vic Magsaysay, Prospero Pichay, John Osmeña, and Luis "Chavit" Singson. These candidates obtained only one or two votes each.

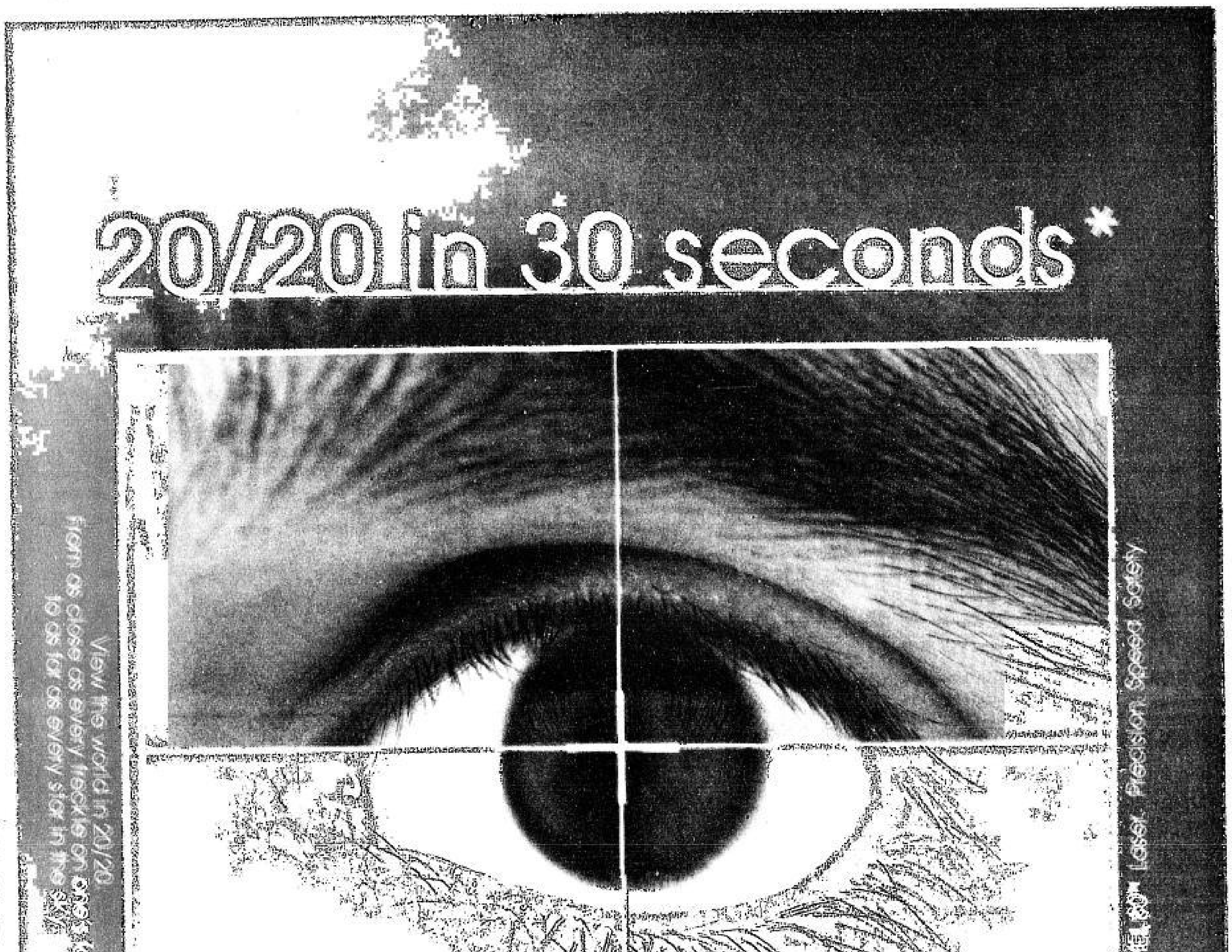
An election officer who requested anonymity because she was not authorized to speak said the votes cast in the precincts in the New Era Compound were easy to count.

"In our precinct, there were only five who voted differently, voting one, two or three candidates outside the prescribed list, but still generally sticking to the bloc," the election officer said.

Officials at the INC precincts followed an unorthodox counting system that allowed them to wrap up the count in one hour: They segregated the straight bloc votes from the ballots with other candidates written on them.

After the count corresponding to the number of straight bloc votes had been placed on the tally board, the election officer then read out the ballots that listed nonprescribed candidates.

By 4 p.m., the job was done with only a last-minute verification of results to be undertaken. *Jeannette I. Andrade*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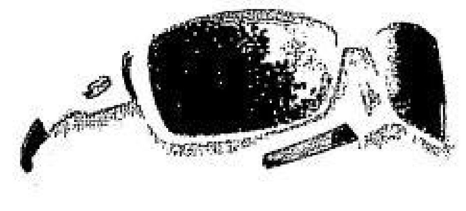

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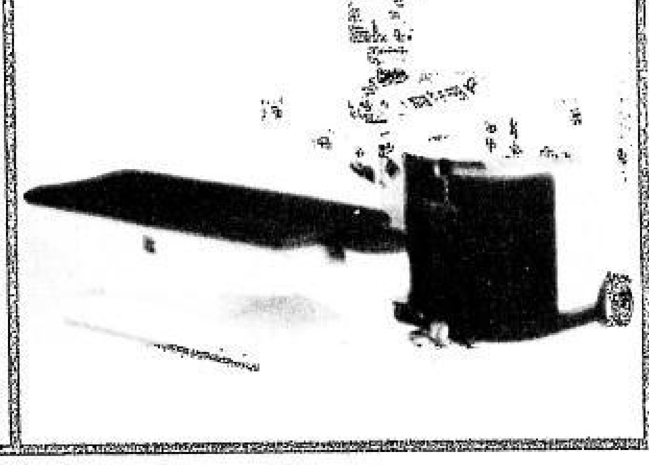

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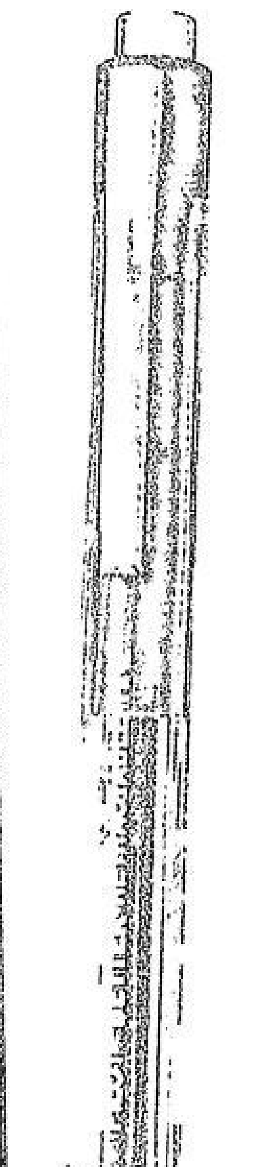

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Pinoy workers invade Iraq despite ban

By Jerome Aning

IGNORING THE GOVERNMENT ban, thousands of Filipino workers are braving the risk and entering Iraq in droves because of the high-paying jobs available in the strife-torn Middle East country.

Most are recruited online by giant American companies or hired on the spot in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

By choice

The overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)—numbering about 35,000—are there by choice and are not trapped in the fighting as claimed by Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr. according to Emmanuel Geslani, a consultant of several Manila-based recruitment agencies.

Geslani told reporters Filipinos in the Middle East have been applying for jobs on the websites of giant US contractors Halliburton-subsidiary Kellog, Brown and Root (KBR), Bechtel, Fluor, General Dynamics, Titan Corp. CIS (Critical Intervention Services) and Parsons Project Iraq.

"The salaries offered can reach up to $6,000 a month depending on the position. Filipino truck drivers are paid $3,000 a month while their American counterparts are paid even higher," he said.

Actively recruiting

Geslani said the US Army Corps of Engineers had contracted several Middle East companies to undertake multibillion-dollar infrastructure works in Iraq, while the US International Aid for Development (Usad) and the US state department also had projects in Iraq. The two agencies are actively recruiting Americans and English-speaking foreign nationals for their numerous projects in Iraq.

High salaries

"The more than 10,000 Filipinos in Iraq are attracted by high salaries in US dollars and benefits," he said, adding that there was a 100-percent increase from the 2004 figure of 5,000 documented Filipino workers deployed there.

The US has around 50 or more military bases all over Iraq and the job of maintaining and operating facilities within these bases, according to Geslani, was usually given to Filipinos because of their ability to communicate easily with Americans.

Two largest US bases

He said that two of the largest US bases were Camp Victory and Camp Anaconda where majority of the 10,000 Filipinos are housed in comfortable air-conditioned quarters, eat basically the same food that US soldiers get and have access to communications and entertainment facilities.

"They are safe within the walls of the bases and are not exposed to danger as long as they follow base regulations," he said.

Logistics companies

In Kuwait, Geslani said there were many logistics companies that employed Filipino and multinational drivers.

Huge trailer-trucks ferry thousands of tons of food, water, medicine, fuel and ammunition to bases in Iraq from Kuwait through a heavily guarded road and escorted by helicopter gunships.

Geslani said he learned from Philippine Embassy officials in Lebanon that about 3,000 of the 30,000 OFWs who "departed" for Manila during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah actually went to Dubai to seek employment in other countries, especially Iraq.

Violate any ban

"It is clear that Filipinos will violate any ban imposed by the government in view of their earnest desire to work abroad and uplift their families from poverty. The ban might as well be lifted in Iraq since the government is helpless in enforcing it so that all those undocumented workers will be recognized and given the same benefits that legal workers are receiving from licensed agencies," Geslani said.

He said documented OFWs who left in 2003-04 were entitled to mandatory life insurance of $10,000 and additional benefits from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

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Palace mulls farmers' debt write-off

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG HAS CREATED A TASK FORCE to study the possibility of writing off farmers' agrarian reform debts, now estimated at billions of pesos since the wider land reform program was started in the Cory Aquino administration.

According to Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo, farmers who availed themselves of loans provided for under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law but who had not been able to pay their amortizations may soon be presented with a "relief from debt."

President Macapagal-Arroyo created the task force, after noting that the amount of unpaid liabilities had reached the "billions of pesos" mark, and the farmer-beneficiaries had been laboring "under the heavy debt" trying to make ends meet.

To address this, Saludo said in a statement, the President signed on May 11 Administrative Order No. 176 creating a body that would study the "proposed write-off of agrarian reform debt to give relief to thousands of farmer-beneficiaries unable to pay amortizations for many years and thus effect genuine land distribution."

Saludo said the task force will come out with its report on the proposed debt condonation in six months.

"The task force will also evaluate existing agrarian reform models and recommend reforms to make them more responsive and relevant to the needs and interests of farmer-beneficiaries," he said.

It will be chaired by the agrarian reform secretary, with the secretaries of finance and justice and representatives of the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association as members.

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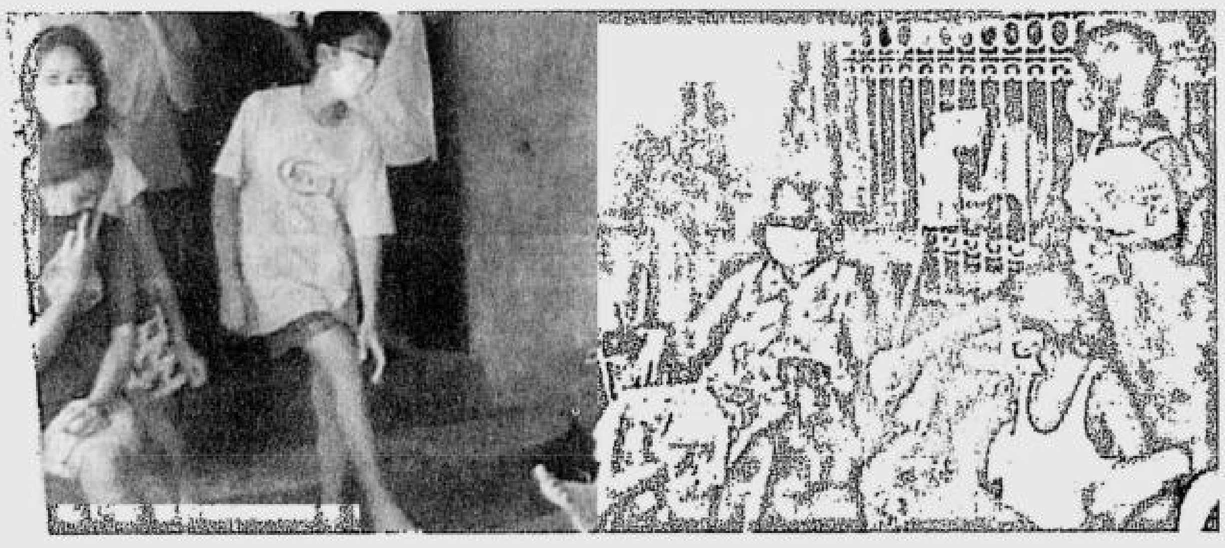

BULUSAN CALMS DOWN

A family in Barangay Sangkayon, Juban, Sorsogon, wears face masks for protection from the ashes spewed Saturday by Mt. Bulusan. The volcano went on silent mode yesterday with only 58 high-frequency volcanic quakes recorded in the past 24 hours. Volcanologists are keeping an eye on three vents, which have developed on the volcano's slope facing the town of Casiguran, which could cause problems later on. They were set to conduct an aerial survey to determine the status of the vents. BOBBY Q. LABALAN, INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 15, 2007
6th Week of Easter
Isidore the Farmer

1st Reading: Acts 16:22-34
Gospel: John 16:5-11

Jesus said to his disciples, "But now I am going to the One who sent me and none of you asks me where I am going; instead you are overcome with grief because of what I have said.

"Indeed believe me: It is better for you that I go away, because as long as I do not leave, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go away, it is to send him to you, and when he comes, he will vindicate the truth in face of the world with regard to sin, to the way of righteousness, and to the Judgment.

"What has been the sin? They did not believe in me. What is the way of righteousness? I am on the way to the Father, meanwhile you will not see me. What Judgment? The Ruler of this world has himself been condemned."

Commentary

In Philippi, Paul and Silas are flogged and put in maximum security. Yet that night after praying, there is an earthquake, the chains fall and the doors open. They can run, but they don't and the jailer asks for what will save him. He and his household come to believe and are baptized. In fact he takes them out of the jail, tends to their wounds, and serves them a feast to celebrate newfound joy in the Lord (eucharist).

Jesus continues to tell us that he is leaving and that we will grieve. But in truth, if Jesus does not leave then we will never know the Spirit, the Paraclete (alongside of us). This is the presence of the Risen Lord with us, who will prove the world wrong about sin, justice (or the way of righteousness), and condemnation (or to Judgment). We are given the Paraclete to stand firm in the world in the face of sin, evil, injustice, violence, and their false judgments.

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Memorial in honor of Julia Campbell to rise in Albay

CAMPBELL AP

A BUST OF JULIA Campbell, the US Peace Corps volunteer who was murdered in Ifugao last month, will be erected in honor of the slain American as well as all the Peace Corps volunteers who have served in the Philippines.

The National Association of Independent Travel Agencies (Naitas) said it had raised P200,000 for the design and construction of the bust, which will be put up in Albay where Campbell had taught school for two years and promoted environmental awareness.

Naitas said it would need at least P1 million to complete the project.

Foreign Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin, Philippine Tourism Authority general manager Dean Barbers and Dannie Roa, director of the tourism department's Central Visayas office, have given their support for the project, according to Naitas.

"The structure will pay tribute to Campbell and her colleagues in the Peace Corps movement," said Naitas chair Robert Lim Joseph. "It aims to heal the wounds and ease the pain caused by the tragedy."

Joseph added: "This is to show the world that majority of Filipinos are peace-loving and caring and they had the highest respect for Campbell. It will show to the world that Filipinos treasure the work of the US Peace Corps volunteers."

Naitas affiliates Travel Cooperative of the Philippines and Save our Skies are part of the project.

Campbell was killed on April 8 in Ifugao where she went alone to hike in the world-famous rice terraces. Her buried body was found on April 18 and a suspect, Juan Duntugan, 25, surrendered shortly afterward.

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Bathe with PGH soap

THE PHILIPPINE General Hospital is coming out with its own soap brand.

It will be your ordinary bath soap, formulated by nursing attendants, utility workers and other hospital employees.

The aim is to augment the hospital staff's meager salaries as well as mark the centennial of the PGH this year, according to hospital director Carmelo Alfiler. The soap will carry the hospital's logo.

During the launch of the livelihood project and the countdown to the centennial celebration in August last Wednesday, Alfiler told the INQUIRER the project was a sign of the hospital's efforts not only to serve its poor patients, but its own employees.

The PGH Nurses Association will spearhead the program. The soap will also be sold in the hospital's cooperative store and other outlets.

The round-shaped bar will come in variants such as with coconut oil and goat's milk.

It was launched on Wednesday as the hospital started its 100-day countdown to its 100th year anniversary.

The hospital, under the University of the Philippines, was established on Aug. 17, 1907. It now receives about 600,000 patients a year, nearly 90 percent of whom are poor, Alfiler said.

The hospital also launched on Wednesday the renovation of its pay and charity wards, thanks to donations from the national government and a large soda company.

In a proclamation signed last month, Malacañang declared August PGH Centennial Month. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

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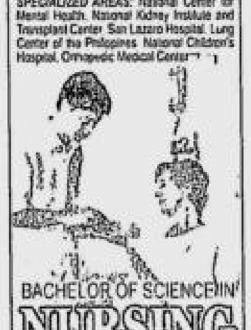

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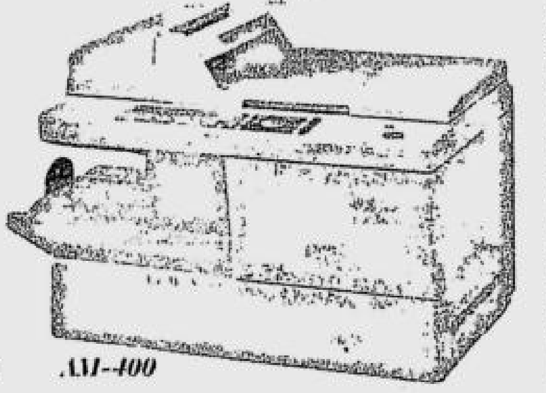

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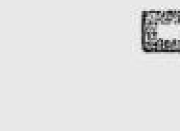

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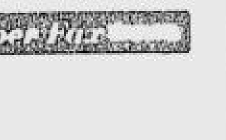

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Accept the results, GMA calls on all candidates

AT THE CLOSE OF VOTING hours yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo called on all candidates in the hotly contested midterm elections to accept the results.

The President made the call at around 3 p.m., or seven hours after casting her ballot in her hometown of Lubao, Pampanga. Immediately after voting, she returned to Malacañang where she was expected to have monitored the elections with her key officials.

"Today the Filipino people have united behind democracy. We are proud of our history as a free nation. I extol the voters who trooped to the polls to cast their ballot, free of coercion and according to their own will," Ms Arroyo said in Filipino.

"Sangandaan din ang araw na ito para sa Pilipinas habang hinihintay natin ang paghirang ng mga nagwagi. Nagpapasalamat ako sa lahat ng kandidato, anuman ang partido o pagkiling sa pulitika, na nakibaka nang buong sigasig, patas at tapat para sa boto ng taong bayan (This day marks a turning point for the Philippines as we await the proclamation of the winners; I would like to thank all the candidates, regardless of party or political affiliation, who fought hard and well to win the vote, fair and square)," she said.

Ms Arroyo, who has been accused of stealing the 2004 presidential election, and who has denied wrongdoing, appealed to the candidates to respect the verdict.

"Intense rivalry marks all campaigns, but let us be magnanimous, win or lose. For the sake of the nation, we should close the chapter of strife and recrimination when the verdict is declared and open the door to national unity and solidarity," she said.

The President commended the Commission on Elections and its deputized agencies "for ably protecting suffrage."

She made particular mention of "our teachers whose heroism and dedication are renowned in times like these," and the military and police "for holding the line on peace and order, and nonpartisanship."

Ms Arroyo expressed gratitude to the religious, civic and professional groups that served as poll watchdogs and the foreign observers "who came to share our passion and vigilance for democracy."

"At a time when many places in the world are still aflame with struggles for freedom, let us thank the Lord for giving us the gift of democracy that has found sanctuary in our generations past and present, as we continue to count our blessings of economic growth and political stability," she said. *Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Abalos lost, Trillanes cheered, Erap home alone

From page A1

erybody's watching, everybody's wanting to vote ahead of the other," he said.

Nevertheless, Abalos assailed the yet unidentified culprits behind the distribution of the bogus memo he had supposedly signed, which threw out a resolution giving due course to the candidacy of Floydelia Diasen, the wife of Kalinga Vice Gov. Rommel Diasen who was killed in an ambush two weeks ago.

He denied having issued such a memo, saying it was apparently meant to sow confusion among voters in Kalinga.

Generally peaceful

Still and all, despite such "minor incidents" and the postponement of elections in some provinces because of insurgency threats and imminent acts violence by political rivals, the Comelec declared the midterm polls to be "generally peaceful."

But over at its Social Action Center, the hotline was bombarded with calls from concerned citizens complaining about the bunting and campaign flaglets that sprouted near schools and poll precincts in Metro Manila over the weekend.

A hotline staffer said one caller even complained that the bunting interfered with their phone connection.

No sample ballot

The Lubao Central Elementary School in Lubao, Pampanga, was crawling with members of the Presidential Security Group and the local police when President Macapagal-Arroyo came to vote.

Dressed in a deep red pantsuit adorned with a glittering brooch, Ms Arroyo arrived promptly at 8 a.m. at the school, where she is registered as Voter No. 83. She lined up behind 10 other voters at Precinct No. 1, Barangay San Nicolas, Lubao East Central District.

She spent the 10 minutes waiting in the queue chatting with Liwayway Mendoza, district supervisor of the Department of Education, school principal Felicidad Santos and other Kapampangan.

She was overheard saying she did not have a sample ballot with her, but she brought her own pen.

5 minutes to vote

Ahead of the President in the queue was her elder son, reelectionist Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, who got to the precinct 10 minutes ahead of her.

Ms Arroyo's brother Diosdado Jr. and half-sister Ma. Cielo Macapagal-Salgado are also voters in the same precinct. But they were not around at the time she was there.

After signing up and affixing her thumb marks on the voter's list, the President took her ballot and chose the chair in the back of the small room.

She ignored the chair designated for her by the PSG and the school officials and went to the most secluded portion of the room after photographers and TV cameramen, who were positioned outside, urged her to take a seat near the windows.

She took five minutes to fill up her ballot.

Ms Arroyo stayed in the principal's office for a few minutes before boarding her white coaster. After about 30 minutes in the school, her convoy left for Malacañang.

Erap for Goma?

Did Joseph Estrada vote for actor Richard "Goma" Gomez?

The ousted President exercised his right to suffrage at around 11:30 a.m. at his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal, where he is under house arrest for the alleged crime of plunder.

A five-member Comelec team from his hometown of San Juan brought the election materials to his rest house; his ballot was counted at the Pedro Cruz Elementary School.

It was Estrada's third time to vote in detention since his ouster in January 2001.

INQUIRER photographer Joan Bondoc, one of the members of the media who covered the brief proceedings, said she spotted the name of Gomez, an independent candidate, on the 12th slot for the senatorial slate in Estrada's filled-up ballot.

Home alone

But Estrada one of the party elders of the Genuine Opposition (GO), declined to confirm this when reached later on the phone. All he would say was that he had made sure "nobody else would fill in the blanks."

GO is technically made up of only 11 candidates. Early in the campaign period, it counted independent candidate Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan as a "guest candidate," completing its 12-member lineup.

On the phone, Estrada gamely disclosed that with only police sentries and his guards from the Presidential Security Group for company, he was practically home alone yesterday.

It turned out that the nine members of his household staff (cooks, drivers, maids and secretaries) had to go to their respective hometowns to vote.

All quiet at HQ

It did not feel like Election Day at the GO national campaign headquarters in Makati City.

Explaining to reporters the laid-back atmosphere and the lack of activity, GO campaign manager Sen. Sergio "Serge" Osmeña III said: "We are in the eye of the storm. How can you preempt massive cheating? The cheating will start tomorrow."

Osmeña stayed home most of the day and turned up at the headquarters at past 3 p.m. His deputy, Renato "RC" Constantino Jr., got in two hours earlier.

GO campaign spokesperson Adel Tamano arrived in the afternoon from Marawi City, where he had voted.

Osmeña said he and Constantino had received reports of irregularities from their contacts in the field.

But no election hotlines had been set up at the HQ.

Constantino brought with him five unopened cell phone SIM cards which he said they were to use as hotlines to receive reports from the field.

GO candidates were left to do their own monitoring.

LP ops center

In contrast, the Liberal Party, a member of the opposition coalition, has set up a 24-hour operation center at its headquarters at the second floor of the Matrinco Building on Pasong Tamo in Makati.

LP director general Chit Asis said the party would guard against cheating by tabulating results based on the official copies of election results (ERs) it would receive from the Comelec.

The Comelec has declared the LP the dominant minority political party in the midterm elections, which entitles the party to the sixth copy of ERs, certificates of canvass from municipalities, and statement of votes from provinces.

According to Asis, the LP will go on 24-hour operations starting Monday night until it completes a national tabulation for its own use in two to three weeks.

"But we can't publish it because we're not accredited by Comelec as a quick-count body," she said.

All by herself

Actress Susan Roces, dressed in a green suit, cast her ballot at Xavier School in San Juan early in the morning.

"Of course, I'm with the opposition. We expect that most, if not all, of our candidates will win," she told GMA 7 shortly after voting.

Asked how different this year's elections were to her, Roces paused to collect her thoughts.

Then she said in Filipino, her voice breaking: "I'm all by myself now. It used to be that I had someone to vote with."

She was referring to her husband, movie legend Fernando Poe Jr., who was the opposition's standard-bearer in the 2004 presidential election. He died of an aneurysm in December 2004.

No assistor

Gloria Licad-Lanot, 89, who is physically handicapped and wheelchair-bound, was unable to completely fill up her ballot because her daughter was not permitted to assist her.

Said her other daughter, writer Marra PL. Lanot: "This is in violation of the provision in the handbook of the Board of Election Inspectors that an 'assistor' may 'fill out the ballot of an illiterate or physically challenged person ... if his/her condition is readily obvious.'"

Licad-Lanot, widow of the writer Serafin Lanot, tried to vote at Precinct No. 4564-A (for Barangay South Triangle) at the Kamuning Elementary School in Quezon City.

Security tightened

Tighter security because of an alleged assassination plot attended GO's Antonio Trillanes IV when he voted in a precinct in Caloocan City yesterday morning, according to his spokesperson Rolando Averillo.

"His security personnel were doubled and his plans to stay a little longer outside his detention cell was cancelled because of the information provided by his sympathizers from military intelligence," Averillo said.

Trillanes, a former Navy lieutenant, is accused of rebellion and is being tried on coup d' etat charges for his participation in the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny. He is detained at the Marine Custodial Center in Fort Bonifacio.

News of the alleged slay plot—supposedly dubbed "Oplan Allan," after Trillanes' deceased infant son—spread on Saturday, Averillo said.

Cheering, clapping

Dressed in a blue shirt and khaki jeans, Trillanes arrived at the Holy Infant Montessori School in BF Homes 1, Deparo, Caloocan, in a black Nissan Urvan with heavily tinted windows at around 9:30 a.m.

He was accompanied by his mother and brother when he entered the polling precinct. He stayed for less than 10 minutes.

An earlier plan to have his wife join him was cancelled because of the supposed threat, Averillo said.

Before the rebel soldier's arrival, a crowd had formed outside Precinct No. 0678B.

The sound of cheering and clapping accompanied him from the time he alighted from his vehicle up to the time he reached the second floor of the school building. It ended after he boarded his vehicle and left.

Mere propaganda

But the military was unimpressed by talk of Oplan Allan.

"Although there was no attribution as to who will perpetuate these actions, we do believe it's mere propaganda," said Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, the military information chief.

Bacarro said he did hear "rumors" on Sunday night of the supposed slay plot.

Asked whether the fact that nothing happened to Trillanes when he went out to vote proved that the rumors were exactly that, Bacarro said: "Well, you can conclude [that] it's probably part of political propaganda."

No rest for Loren

There will be no rest for GO's Loren Legarda—not until she's proclaimed No. 1.

The consistent frontrunner in the surveys said as much when asked about her plans for the rest of the day after casting her ballot before noon.

Legarda, dressed in her usual campaign outfit of white top and blue denims, was accompanied by her father and brother when she walked from her ancestral home in an old subdivision in Malabon City not too far from the Potrero Elementary School.

She said she would not go home to rest but planned to stay at the GO headquarters in Makati to monitor the counting of the votes after a short visit to a nearby church.

"I am not obsessed with being No. 1, but I have a responsibility for the people who voted for me as No. 1," Legarda said when asked why it was important for her to be proclaimed No. 1.

She also said it would be "highly improbable" for her to be dislodged from the top slot, "not according to me, but to the pollsters."

"And it's hard to surmount at least 5 million votes," she said. *Reports from Jocelyn R. Uy, Juliet Labog-Javellana, Volt Contreras, Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Miko Morelos, Nancy C. Carvajal, Christine O. Avendano and Frances G. Mangosing (volunteer)*

10 dead on Election Day, including 3 in Masbate

From page A1

volatile province of Abra, two in Lanao del Sur and one each in Basilan, Negros Occidental and Compostela Valley.

The Philippine National Police said that as of noon yesterday, 118 people had been killed since the campaign started on Jan. 14, including four murdered yesterday.

The INQUIRER count is 128 based on police and military reports from the field gathered by its reporters. The toll includes 10 slain yesterday and two additional deaths on Sunday which were reported only yesterday.

'Situation looks good'

"Generally, the situation looks good," said PNP Deputy Director General Avelino Razon. "Overall, the situation is peaceful except for some untoward incidents." Razon's assessment was based on election day violence, citing nine people were killed in 2004 and 14 in 2001.

Bernabe Serafin Jr., 33, and Michael Sanchez, 28, driver and supporter of mayoral candidate Eleuterio Castillo Sr. of Pio V. Corpuz town in Masbate were gunned down by unknown attackers armed with M-16 rifles, Army Lt. Col. Rhoderick Parayno, spokesperson of the military's Southern Luzon Command in Lucena City, said.

Unidentified gunmen

Serafin and Sanchez were riding a motorcycle when they were ambushed early in the morning, Parayno said.

BACKUP BODYGUARD of a La Union politician cleans his "paltik" (homemade gun) under the nose of a poll watcher on the eve of Election Day.

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Unidentified gunmen also struck at Barangay San Carlos in Milagros, Masbate, at 10 a.m., killing Julino Abapo, a candidate for vice mayor.

In Abra, Duardin Gonzales, barangay captain of Layugan in Bucay, was shot allegedly by Councilor Jojo Sales when Gonzales was called to pacify a fight at 1 a.m., Senior Supt. Alexander Pumecha, Abra police director, said. Sales has been arrested.

In Lagayan town, armed men opened fire at a vehicle carrying board of election inspectors and policemen, wounding five.

In Tubaran, Lanao del Sur, supporters of two local candidates engaged in a firefight, leaving two persons, including a soldier, dead and eight others wounded, the office of Civil Defense of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said.

In Nabunturan, Compostela Valley, soldiers killed one of three armed men who refused to surrender their firearms at a military checkpoint, police said.

Eliseo Comawas, a supporter of reelectionist Mayor Santiago Barcelona of Escalante, Negros Occidental, was killed at 12:30 a.m. near his house.

In Basilan, a certain Hudar Muhamar was killed while five others were wounded in a shootout between rival candidates in Sumisip and Akbar towns.

There were scattered bombing incidents reported yesterday in Pangalungan in Maguindanao, in Datu Odin Sinsuat in Shariff Kabunsuan and Dapitan City that left several people wounded.

Late police reports said that on Sunday a retired Air Force Sgt. Dionisio Bade, 47, was killed in a gun battle with political rivals in Rosario, Agusan del Sur, and reelectionist councilor Edwin Ramos of Maitum in Sarangani was shot dead, also on Sunday.

Team Unity senatorial candidate Ralph Recto is blaming Malacañang's relentless bid to railroad Charter change up to the start of the campaign season in January for the high death toll in these elections.

No time to prepare

In a phone interview, Recto said that some "unscrupulous" politicians had to resort to extreme measures to get back on the winning track.

"I believe that part of the reason for the violence is that some unscrupulous politicians were not prepared for the campaign and had to make up for the lost time because they thought there would be no elections this year," Recto said.

Recto said it was not until the last few days of 2006 that the public was sure that elections would push through as the House of Representatives had hurriedly adopted a resolution forming a constituent assembly, without the Senate consent, and the suspension of this year's elections. It was only after a strong public outcry that Malacañang and the House dropped the plan to avoid a crisis.

Recto said that some of the politicians could have resorted to violence because they did not have enough time to prepare for their reelection.

Recto said that addressing this unnecessary bloodbath should be the top priority in the next Senate. Recto said that other election matters that need to be settled are the modernization of the elections and setting a cap on election spending. *With reports from Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Bobby Labalan and Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Charlie C. Señase, Bert Laput, Richel Umel, Julie S. Alipala, Ramil Bangues, Aquiles Z. Zonio, Jeoffrey Maitem, Chris Panganiban, Nash Maulana, Dondon Dinoy, Ryan Rosauro, Franklin Caliguid, Inquirer Mindanao*

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- [illegible]
- **MANDOC, [illegible]** Bulacan
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- **MEDINA, LUCIA C.** [illegible]
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- [illegible]
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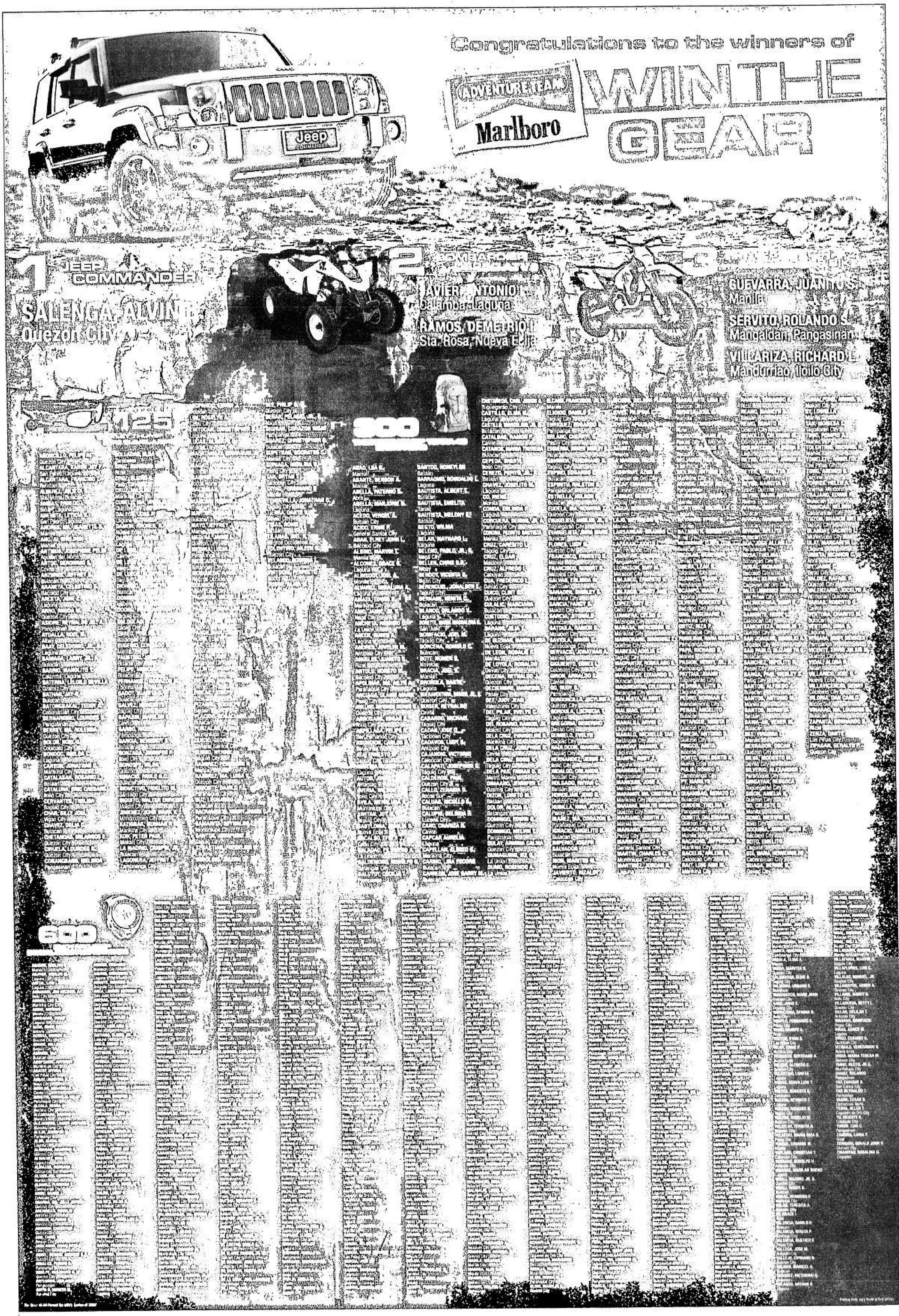

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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

OFW spared from death in Saudi but at a loss on prospects in RP

By Tarra Quismundo

IN A WORN-OUT GRAY SHIRT, FADED jeans and old black shoes tied with laces too short, the Filipino mechanic spared from the death penalty in Saudi Arabia came home to his family last week, happy to be alive but unsure of what he will do next.

Sabiniano Yncierto, 41, a mechanic sentenced to death for killing compatriot Arnold Mingit on Dec. 2, 1999, was released after seven years in a Saudi prison because of a unique law in Saudi Arabia and some other Middle East countries that allows for the payment of "blood money."

Seek forgiveness

He was spared after paying P500,000 to the family of his victim and seeking their forgiveness, both required for a pardon under Saudi law.

According to Yncierto's mother, Lourdes Chan, it was President Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, who put up the money to settle the civil damages to the Mingits in 2001.

"I don't know where to begin," Yncierto told reporters at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Thursday.

'It was an accident'

"I hope people with good hearts can help me start afresh ... I spent 20 years there [Saudi Arabia]and I still do not have a life," said Yncierto, a native of Cebu.

"It wasn't my desire to commit a crime there. It was an accident ... I confessed to it and I repented for it during my long years in jail," he said.

Blood money

Yncierto arrived a day after 35-year-old Sarah Dematera, a migrant worker, who was also spared from death after she served 15 years in a Riyadh jail for killing her employer. She was also released after she raised the "blood money."

On hand to welcome Yncierto was Philippine Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Antonio Villamor, who helped facilitate his release, and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration head Marianito Roque.

Meanwhile, some 200 more overseas Filipino workers whose employment experiences in the Middle East turned sour are expected to return home in the next two weeks as the government pursues their repatriation to decongest migrant workers' shelters in the region.

Returnees

Close to 600 migrant workers, most of them women hired as domestic workers, have come home since March as part of this program.

The repatriates included OFWs who sought refuge in Philippine missions because of unpaid wages, sexual and other abuse, Roque said.

Promised assistance

The next batch of returnees includes 56 from Abu Dhabi, 22 from Dubai, 30 from Riyadh, 45 from Kuwait and 30 each from Qatar and Oman.

Last week, 139 migrant workers from Lebanon, the largest batch so far, were flown home by the government and were promised assistance to start their lives anew. Most of them were domestics, including undocumented workers, who fled their employers because of abuse.

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The Philippine Bar Association gave this year's Justice Roman Ozaeta Award for the most outstanding law practitioner to lawyer Cleofe Villar Verzola (left), former president of the UP Women Lawyer's Circle and a partner in the Agabin Verzola Hermoso Layaoen Law Office. Presenting the award is lawyer Victor Lazatin, PBA president, while Rita Linda Jimeno, PBA special projects chair, looks on. Former Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban was the speaker during the award rites.

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OPINION

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Worst practices

EDITORIAL

WHAT'S WRONG WITH PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS? One is tempted to answer: Everything. Or, almost everything.

To begin with, we have no real major political parties that have differentiated platforms and that abide by certain articulated principles. What we have, particularly during presidential elections, are groups built around personalities. In senatorial elections, and in the present one particularly, what we have are temporary alliances formed for the purpose of wresting majority control of the Senate.

Election campaigns are not issue-oriented. There is hardly any discussion of issues, except perhaps on TV or in other public forums where candidates are asked about their stand on certain matters. But often, there is no in-depth discussion or debate because of the limited time and the number of candidates that have to be questioned.

The high cost of campaigns effectively limits the field to billionaires, millionaires and people who are ready to sacrifice principles to get funds for their campaign. This means that poor but qualified candidates have very little chance of winning, unless they are supported with donations by the people themselves. The billionaires and millionaires will naturally want to recoup their expenses, and guess where the "reimbursement" will come from? Pork barrel, special funds and projects funded with the people's money.

Because campaign expenses are high, some candidates accept donations from smuggling lords, gambling lords, drug lords and rich businessmen. Once the recipients are elected, they have to pay back their debts to the donors in the form of special privileges, "projects" and concessions, the law, morality and propriety be damned.

It used to be that show-biz people, sports icons and media personalities enjoyed a very good chance of being elected. Now, it appears, at least in the present senatorial election, that show biz, sports and media celebrity is not a major factor in getting elected, or in topping, say, the senatorial elections. The days of song-and-dance campaigning seem to be fading, and now campaigns are waged over TV and radio. But again, that means a huge expenditure of funds, considering how broadcast ads are costly.

The political and religious "command vote" practice treats voters as mindless, driven cattle that are supposed to follow the dictates of their leaders and not their minds and conscience. Among the religious organizations whose support is openly courted by candidates are the Iglesia ni Cristo and El Shaddai. The quid pro quo is that winning candidates are asked to give lucrative concessions as well as important appointive posts in government to members of the religious organization. Is this a good way to run a government?

Since the martial law regime, the military has been playing an important role in elections. In the 2004 election, high-ranking officers were employed to manipulate the results in certain parts of the country. In the current campaign, armed soldiers were deployed to 26 poor barangays in Metro Manila where they campaigned against leftist party-list groups.

Shootings and killings have become an accepted fact of our elections. But they should not be. No elective office is so important that it would justify the taking of even just one human life. But candidates and their supporters think that elective posts are literally something to die for because they are sources of great wealth, power and influence.

Another accepted fact during elections is cheating. There used to be an "acceptable level" of cheating but it has developed from the "retail" level to the "wholesale" level, and some Comelec officials, who are supposed to guard the sanctity of the ballot, are now the very ones who are actively involved in sophisticated forms of cheating. One former Comelec official who is suspected to have conspired with President Macapagal-Arroyo in manipulating the results of the 2004 presidential election might even join the ranks of "honorable" congressmen.

These peculiar features of Philippine elections raise the question of whether they are really a democratic, free and intelligent exercise of the right of suffrage. The fact is that the voters themselves have tolerated them and have not protested loudly and strongly enough against them. The voters themselves have to take the lead in cleansing and reforming the electoral process. They cannot leave this task to government officials and politicians who benefit from the present system. But when will an honest-to-goodness, sustained reform action start?

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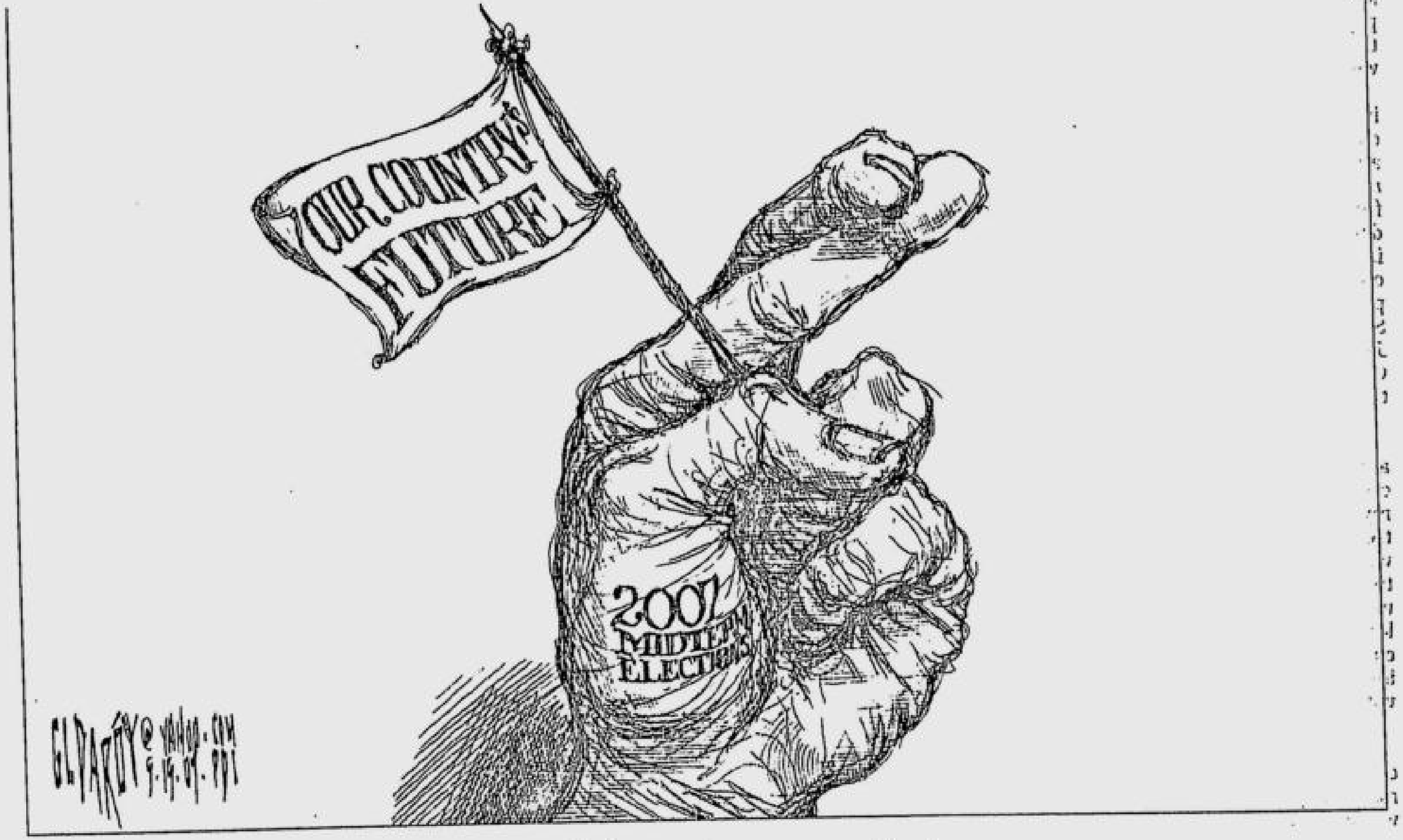

Barabbas' mandate

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"BARABBAS WON THE SNAP ELECTION THAT a panicky Pilate called from the praetorium," a friend commented after voting. He would like to tell that to decent candidates trounced in Monday's elections by political scavengers, but he wasn't sure if the line would soothe.

Seared into his mind was an image of a defeated John Major leaving No. 10 Downing Street in London to watch a cricket match. But we're graced with similar examples: Sergio Osmeña Sr., Elpidio Quirino, Carlos Garcia, Diosdado Macapagal, Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos—all left Malacañang with quiet dignity.

Ferdinand Marcos, in contrast, scrambled on a Chinook helicopter, just ahead of a lynching crowd. And how will it be for President Macapagal-Arroyo, come 2010?

"An election victory is a mandate for reform," Tony Blair told Sedgefield constituents on becoming prime minister a decade ago. "It is a mandate for reform, an investment for the future and an instruction to deliver."

Who of those elected Monday think in those terms? The answer impacts on a country that may come apart at the seams from interlocking problems.

"Barabbas was a thief," John wrote, with newsroom directness, in the 4th Gospel. People were incited by their leaders, Luke added (no allusion here to El Shaddai and Iglesia Ni Cristo peddling who-to-vote-for lists). The crowd rejected the Galilean. Instead, they voted for a man "imprisoned for insurrection and murder. And their voices prevailed." *Vox populi, vox Dei?*

Did the Barabbas factor prevail in Monday's polls? This election, after all, was not between clashing visions for governance. Rather, it pitted Barabbas in the Genuine Opposition against Barabbas in Team Unity, from national tickets down to the municipal councils.

Exit polls may offer a hint of the Barabbas quotient in Monday's vote. In 76 hours, we'll have definitive results, vows Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos. Pathetic. Four hours after the polls closed in France, the tallies revealed 53.1 percent of voters had elected Nicolas Sarkozy after an 84.8 percent voter turnout. Credit policy-debates, computerized tallies and spring weather.

The Mega-Pacific scandal spillover handcuffs us still to primitive manual vote counts here. Our ancestors used the same method in the first elections of 1907. Thailand got the vote after 1932, and Singapore and Malaysia followed shortly. These Johnnys-come-lately have computerized their elections since.

But we've cobbled more ways than one to flog the system: from the old *lansadera*, under block voting, "birds, bees and ghosts" of the 1949 polls, wholesale theft in Marcos' citizens' assembly votes to the Garci tapes.

Foreign observers and election monitors from religious and civil-society groups massed for Monday's vote. Much was at stake here. Elections are a democracy's mechanism for renewal. "Democracy is at risk when elections are over before the votes are cast."

Once again, the nation is in debt to thousands of patient and hard-working public school teachers and civil society and religious groups. Grossly underpaid teachers dutifully manned the voting precincts again, coping with obsolete poll procedures. All had to ward off partisan pressure. In so doing, they taught an enduring lesson: "The purpose of freedom is to create it for others."

Unless the Monday polling and count prove credible, no one can predict what will happen. But one thing is sure though: tampered polls will foreclose chances of untangling problems dumped by generations of Barabbases.

Will reforms be derailed again by the start of the 2010 presidential campaign today? "Unofficially, the race to 2010 begins the morning after elections," Sen. Ralph Recto notes. "We are now in the era of perpetual campaigning. There are 156 Sundays left when precincts open again… The campaigning must take a rest."

Problems are compounding as "victors" jockey for 2010 even before the indelible ink is dry on voting fingers. Women delivering babies add three barangays to our population daily. Education Secretary Jesli Lapus needs an additional schoolroom every 15 minutes for kids born seven years back. Today's population of over 86 million is almost four times the 1940 level.

Population probably won't surge to 115.7 million in 18 years, as projections show. Something will give way before then. Death rates would rise, as water shortages savage sanitation. And more kids would shrivel away from chronic hunger. An ecologically wrecked country, hijacked by political dynasties, will gut governance systems. And we'll lag even farther in an Asia of booming national economies. India and China already tower above the rest.

Reforms, like crushing today's culture of impunity, can be delayed again only by courting national collapse. Progress withers if executioners, from the military, politicians or insurgents, play dice with human lives and rights. The Jason Burgos abduction should be the last. Otherwise, tenuous constitutional control of the military by the President invites free fall.

Unlike Sisyphus, our political leaders are not condemned to bicker throughout their lifetime. They're free to protect what is not negotiable, like human life and constitutional values. They're also at liberty to debate and adopt what is feasible.

"In the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet," John F. Kennedy said. "We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

* * *

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Whatever happened to 'tama na'?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WENT TO THE PROTEST-RALLY AT THE Ninoy Aquino monument on Ayala last Friday morning. I normally do not yield my mornings to invitations as mornings are my writing time. But it was the least I could do for the victims of the killings and disappearances.

The activity last Friday was meant to protest the abduction and disappearance of Jonas Burgos in particular, the latest addition to the runaway mayhem in this country. And by far also the most brazen, Burgos having been abducted in broad daylight inside a busy mall, adding whole new dimensions to the "culture of impunity" that has descended on a country pretending to be a democracy.

The activity last Friday culminated in the protesters walking off to the nearby RCBC building to present a manifesto of condemnation of the killings to the head of the European Commission. Such is our current plight that, as in Marcos' time, redress of grievances, particularly of the murderous sort, may be brought only to the doorstep of the international community. It may certainly not be laid before the iron gates of Malacañang: as in Marcos' time only blame for them may be so.

I didn't really expect a lot of people to go there, the rally being in Makati at the unholy hour of 9 a.m. on a Friday, three days before election day. But I was still disappointed by how few actually went. I consoled myself with the thought, "Better fewer, but better," but it didn't go very far as consolations go.

Frankly, I don't know what has happened to us. At least during Marcos' time, we got angry when something utterly vile or starkly evil occurred. We might not have been able to prevent it, but we were outraged when it happened. Plaza Miranda was bombed, and the nation stood still. I still remember the shock and awe that gripped the capital in its wake, the radio reporters and announcers unable to find the words to express the enormity of it. And filled with rage, the country rose and punished its perceived author in the elections a few months later.

Ninoy Aquino was shot at the tarmac and the nation stood still—at least for a while. And then in a rage people flooded the streets, completely literally in the funeral dirge for the victim, shouting, "*Hindi ka nagiisa!*" and "Justice for Ninoy, Justice for All!" Phrases that continue to ring in the ears and stir the blood, capturing as they do the profoundest feelings of empathy and compassion Filipinos are capable of. What did "*Hindi ka nagiisa*" mean but that we shared the same fate as the victim, the bullet that shattered his skull having lodged in our own as well? What did "Justice for Ninoy, Justice for All" mean but that we recognized our common cause, apart from fate, and that, our political, ideological and religious differences notwithstanding, the only way to find restitution for our individual hurts and losses was to seek the same for everyone?

Not long afterward, those cries turned into "*Tama na, sobra na, palitan na.*" The cry of a wounded nation.

Until recently, I've always thought we Filipinos had a threshold of tolerance for pain, beyond which we cried out in anger and lashed out. Until recently, I've always thought, like Rizal, that we were a patient race but that when whipped and humiliated beyond measure we rose like lions to recover our pride. I don't know that the abduction of Jonas Burgos is any less shocking or a cause for shouting, "*Tama na, sobra na,*" than the bombing of Plaza Miranda and the murder of Ninoy Aquino. EC Ambassador Alistair MacDonald himself was shocked by it. The breathtaking contempt for the public, quite apart from human life, it showed should have been enough to stoke the fires of fury in our hearts.

But we have not risen to damn the evil, we have been silent in the face of it. Hell, we haven't even seen it, we were too busy making bets in the cockpit, also called elections. We haven't cried out, "*Tama na, sobra na, abuso na,*" we have muttered, "*OK lang, sige lang, tuloy lang.*"

I don't know what has happened to us. Maybe, it's as Al Gore says about global warming: The reason people are not alarmed by it is that it has happened gradually and not dramatically, one small horror after another rather than one giant cataclysm. Maybe the reason we're not alarmed by the killings is that they have fallen on us like steady rain, one small pool of blood after another rather than the sudden inundation of floodwater from a burst dam.

Or maybe we've bought the idea that the victims are only outsiders or strangers or people we don't know—communists and activists and most alien of all, journalists—and what happened to them cannot possibly happen to us. Well, gaze at Jonas Burgos and despair. It's not merely like what can happen to Jonas can happen to us, it's that what has happened to Jonas has happened to us. We are all Jonas, *hindi ka nagiisa.*

Whatever the source of our numbing, frightening, horrifying muteness, one thing I can say: The elections won't mean a thing in the face of it. Even if the right candidates got voted into power—and that presumes this administration didn't cheat, a presumption as deadly as the one that says it will not kill—they won't be able to save us. A country is never as good as its leaders, it is only as good as its people. A country with horrible leaders but with a people who can bristle and stop wrongdoing will survive. A country with good leaders but with a people who can only say, "Let's move on," in the face of iniquity will not. It is not merely that evil triumphs when good men do nothing, it is that good men invite evil into their wives' bedrooms when they do nothing.

Tama na, sobra na, tigilan na! When will those words explode in our brains again—with all the threat of retribution they inspire?

Turtle-paced count

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

WITH THE VOTING OVER, THE ELECTORAL process moves to the next crucial stage: the counting. In many cities and towns, the counting should be finished by early this morning or a clear trend would have been established. The winners should be known, except in the senatorial race since the results from far-flung areas are not expected in the next few days. In fact, reports say the senatorial results won't be known until two weeks from now.

Delays are unhealthy as they encourage cheating and attempts at destabilization. Every post-election period, there's usually a lot of groaning about our turtle-paced count owing to the *mano-mano* way of voting and counting. Recently Namfrel official Damaso Magbual recalled on our dzRH program that automation worked very well in the ARRM election in the 1990s. He pointed out that the House of Representatives voted to pass the automation law, but it got delayed in the Senate due to interminable debates. Finally, last January Congress passed the law, but by then the Commission of Elections felt there was too little time to automate the May 14 elections.

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The media reported a rise in vote-buying among candidates, which is not surprising, given the economic condition of our people. But to my mind, a more pernicious form of trickery introduced in recent elections and employed more widely this time was the use of indelible ink on the fingers of voters, who had been bought off by unscrupulous politicians, so that they could no longer vote. In vote-buying, the voter can still cast his vote for his real preference after accepting money from a politico. But applying ink on a voter's finger effectively disenfranchises him.

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A number of things were evident during the recent campaign. A lot of people followed the senatorial campaign of the two teams and one reality that was underscored was that members of the Senate, should the people decide to keep it as an institution, should no longer be elected nationally but by region. This will cut down campaign expenses and make campaigning easier. It doesn't make sense for the senators to go national since they don't even get to air their views on many issues anyhow. During the campaign, Team Unity candidates got only two minutes each to speak at major rallies.

Speaking of the Senate race, the Comelec disqualified KBL candidate Joselito Cayetano but held that its ruling could only become final and executory after five days from the promulgation of the decision. The Comelec said only votes cast for "Alan Peter Cayetano" can be considered as valid for the GO candidate. Now, I don't think much of Alan Peter Cayetano, but I think it was rotten for the Comelec to hand down its decision on the eve of the election, so that the five-day period to appeal would run until after the election. Moves like this further damage the Comelec's credibility.

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Another reality was the formidable grass-roots machinery of the administration coalition. This could be attributed partly to President Macapagal-Arroyo's ardent courtship of local officials through many infrastructure projects. But this fact didn't sit well with her usual critics who attacked the administration for "overkill." To my mind, however, the opposition's problem was that it concentrated on waging war against GMA in the media, instead of building a grass-roots presence and political machinery. The opposition expertly used a cooperative media for its anti-GMA campaign and this paid off in the tremendous mileage it got for its national candidates, but at the local level it elected fewer warm bodies. It appears that the administration will continue to dominate the House and the local governments. But it's hard to predict how the Senate configuration will go.

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The managing director of Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. (PERC), Robert Broadfoot, was quoted in ads and in the media as clarifying that PERC never "categorically" made the assertion that the Philippines is the "No. 1 most corrupt country in Asia." Broadfoot was constrained to issue the clarification because this has been played up by various opposition groups, such as the Black & White Movement during the recent campaign. He lamented that the issue of corruption "can and is being politicized in ways that are not particularly helpful to the country's development, but only to serve to push the political agendas of those seizing upon the topic in a particular way." He said that while corruption is "an important issue," it is also one that "can be abused by people for their political ends." The clarification shows two things: that groups such as the Black & White Movement would go to any length to cast the country in a bad light, never mind if its information is inaccurate; and that the administration projection is so laid back that it could only react after so much damage has been done to the country's image.

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Pictures showing residents of Parola Compound in Tondo shooing away militant protesters or linking arms to surround the military personnel in their community speak volumes. Over the past weeks, militant groups from outside the community had vigorously campaigned among church people and in the media to get rid of military elements who had been fielded to certain depressed areas as part of the AFP's operations against the communist insurgency. They got their way and a week before the election, the soldiers were moved out. But this aroused the ire of the residents who wanted the military to stay as they claimed that its presence helped lower the crime rate. Thus, to the persistent query as to why there is no outrage over the unexplained killings of leftist elements or human rights violations by the military, the answer could be: the people at the grass roots often do not look at the military as their enemy, but as their ally.

A pattern of harassment

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AS I WRITE THIS, THERE'S ONLY ABOUT AN hour-and-a-half left before the polls close. While there was nothing out of the usual when my family and I went to our polling place at the Masinag (Antipolo) Elementary School, the ongoing 24-hour election coverage on TV is replete with tales of disruptions, confusion and even violence. Most memorable is the footage taken in a precinct in Lanao where a gaggle of women, later revealed to be relatives, were pushing, shoving, slapping and even hitting each other. Talk about electoral passions!

Less amusing were text messages from friends reporting means being taken by the administration to "ensure" a win for Team Unity. From Maguindanao came this text message Sunday evening claiming pro-GMA operatives were filling up the slots for party-list and the Senate on the ballots. I received a similar text report from a friend in Cagayan de Oro, who said ballots were being filled up in some barangays and that the local government had been "ordered" to produce a win for Team Unity. This string of messages was capped by another message from Sulu affirming that such things were going on, and that such operations had been done "last week *pa*" and that indeed Team Unity was going to win in their area.

While not exactly coming as a shock, such reports are dismaying just the same. One would think that after the s—t hit the fan after the "Garci" revelations, the GMA forces would be more discreet in their cheating. But apparently, so confident are they that they'll get away with their machinations that they have not only continued with "business as usual" but have even raised the stakes, demanding a "12-0" victory, no less.

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I CAUGHT Mahar Mangahas of Social Weather Stations on a TV show saying that he very much doubted if a "12-0" win for either side was possible. Judging from the results of the surveys they carried out during the campaign period, Mangahas said voters were choosing to create "salads" out of their senatorial lineups, a mixed bag of administration, opposition and independent candidates.

Indeed, given how the party system has been rendered meaningless by the dizzying rigodon of politicians who have no problems switching sides regardless of past differences and contradictory statements, people no longer vote according to party affiliation. Instead, especially for national positions, voters rely on their personal assessments of the individual candidates, relying on information they have been able to gather regarding each aspirant's track record, personal history and character. Hardly anyone I talked with regarding the elections has told me he or she was voting "straight" for either administration or opposition, save perhaps for supporters of Ang Kapatiran who say they will vote for all three of its candidates.

Then again, I must be handicapped for moving in a largely middle-class milieu, and among people who are increasingly frustrated and disgusted by our present brand of politics. No wonder supporters of Ang Kapatiran loom large in my circle.

* * *

STILL, there is some basis for the perception that the Arroyo administration has been using everything within its powers to turn the tide of voters' preferences its way.

The Black & White Movement, a broad-based coalition of anti-administration groups, notes an emerging pattern of election-related violence and harassment, perpetrated, it said, "with the intent to either grab power or retain it by politicians (who) wish only to 'serve the people'."

While more than 100 people have already been killed or injured as a result of election-related violence, there have also been cases of what the B&W Movement calls "much publicized, needless harassment," ranging from the preventive suspension order (since rescinded) of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and the suspension of Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo. Also glaring have been the attempts to thwart the candidacies of Genuine Opposition candidates Alan Peter Cayetano and Noynoy Aquino, through the fielding of unknown namesakes.

Less publicized incidents, as tallied by B&W Movement, include the sudden re-shuffling of Board of Election Inspectors members in Bukidnon, where Malou Acosta, who has made a name for herself doing NGO work and women's advocacy, is running against Virgilio Garcillano. The infamous "Garci" even had the gall to complain on TV that his opponent was "cheating" him. Cheating the master of institutionalized cheating?! Anyway, Acosta is disturbed because the new BEI members are reportedly "Garci protégées."

Just before election day, hundreds of school teachers in Taguig-Pateros, which just happens to be Cayetano's bailiwick and where his wife Lani is running for a House seat, were reported to have been denied appointment to serve in the BEI.

* * *

AND in the "usually quiet town" of Biñan, Laguna, supporters of Vice Mayor Len Naguiat, who is running for mayor with the NPC opposition, are reportedly being harassed by the police as well as members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group. The law enforcers have been raiding the homes of Naguiat's team leaders, "ostensibly to look for illegal weapons, always coming away empty-handed," says the B&W Movement. Naguiat's opponent happens to be Cooki Yatco, son-in-law of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos.

"What gives? Have you noticed a trend here?" asks the Black & White Movement statement condemning the use of such "iron-fist tactics" against opposition candidates. We must also note the use of such tactics with the apparent tolerance, if not connivance, of the Comelec.

A pattern of harassment has emerged. Let's hope it was not pervasive enough to throw into doubt the results of yesterday's voting, and that we can live with the outcome.

Summer workshops

COMMENTARY

Neni Sta. Romana Cruz

THE LONG HOT SUMMER VACATION IS WORKshop time for teachers and students. It is hardly vacation time for parents who want their children to be preoccupied with activities they would normally not have time for during the school year. Hopefully, trying to keep their children happy and productive for most of the day will lead the parents to a better appreciation of a typical workday for a teacher.

Summer workshop offerings for children range in variety and in price that one wonders what has happened to the old mixed pleasures of summer. Tree climbing, going out of town with cousins, picking fruits, playing *patintero* and *tumbang preso*, doing arts and crafts at home, cooking and baking with Mama, playing secretary in Papa's office, and being assigned household chores on which one's allowance hinged, and of course, reading all day, writing in one's diary—where have all these gone? Must summer fun always cost?

It was thus refreshing to hear about Unang Hakbang Foundation's Talon, Takbo, Likha month-long summer arts program in Mandaluyong for 500 underprivileged children ages 8 to 14. It offered dance, singing, drawing, taekwondo, arnis, basketball and *futkal*(football *sa kalye* or street football, played with a smaller goal and shorter field). There were close to 40 volunteer teachers like Ditas da Silva and Choy Quesada who coached the students in music and dance. It was free for all students and on lucky days, even juice snacks were provided by a sponsor or two.

During the school year, Unang Hakbang Foundation led by Ollie Lucas Sy-Quia continues its free tutorial programs in reading and math for public school children. Because of the individualized assistance provided, the students who normally would drop out because of unsatisfactory academic performance are better motivated and manage to improve their class standing. This after-school program provides the support that the burdened classroom teacher finds humanly impossible to do with the existing class size. It is also the supervision that cannot be expected from home.

One of the teachers who works full-time for the after-school program, Merlita Adviento, took time off from her teaching duties to attend teacher training workshops of the SAGER Learning Institute at the Emilio Aguinaldo College on San Marcelino, Manila, to better help the children of different capabilities in the daily tutorials. (SAGER is a fledgling group of teachers who are committed to promoting excellence in education through teacher training, curriculum development and mentorships.) Youthful and enthusiastic about her job despite its many challenges, she was eager to learn how to make math more fun for students. Workshop facilitator Ike Estalilla showed Merlita and the rest of the class how to make math more concrete and more comprehensible to everyone. Who says learning and fun are incompatible?

And in answer to the frequent lament of not having enough reading materials, Soriano did a literary analysis of a current hit from Bamboo, "Tatsulok," to prove that there is poetry in songs and rich layers of social issues to mine.

Other teacher training workshops offered were "Write for Success" by Raquel D. Ching which might as well have been billed as power in writing, and "Biography as History" by Vicky Huang. The latter is a workshop that would warm historian Ambeth Ocampo's heart, for it used family stories as starting points for the study of history by putting them in context.

More recent was a two-day workshop for teachers and librarians organized by the Philippine Normal University Library headed by Dr. Maria A. Orendain in collaboration with the National Book Development Board. It was another valiant attempt to promote the culture of reading, and an endeavor that must be lauded and encouraged. But if reading is good for everyone, why is proof still needed to convince? Isn't an unforgettable book that has touched the reader's heart the most convincing proof of its magic, its wonder, its power?

Even if I feel fora like this are speaking to the converted, it is always gratifying to be in the company of kindred believers. The audience passed the reading trivia quiz questions posed before them, something most other audiences don't (the education students could name the 2006 National Artist for Literature and knew what JK Rowling's muggles meant).

Best of all, when I talked of reading aloud to young and old alike as the most effective and the most painless way of teaching reading, Miguel Cobaria, a PNU professor of library science, stood up to say that he had been reading aloud himself weekly for a few years now to prisoners. And that yes, even hardened prisoners soften and are so touched by literature they are moved to tears.

That late summer afternoon, one could not but feel that there was reason to be hopeful about literacy.

Neni Sta. Romana Cruz is a writer and editor and a member of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People and a trustee of Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation. E-mail comments to nenisrc@gmail.com

Choice among evils

YOUNG BLOOD

Nurhatima Dumato Aljani

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

A WEEK AGO, I CAME ACROSS A BOOK OF ESSAYS ENTItled "Ethics (and other Liabilities): Trying to Live Right in an Amoral World" by Henry Stein, a former ethics columnist of Esquire magazine. It's a good buy at only P35.

Though the book is quite old, I found it very interesting and I couldn't stop reading until I had finished it in its entirety. The essays are about the lives of the Americans in the 1980s. One essay, titled "Choosing Among Evils," discusses issues related to voting.

It reminded me of my professor in Political Science 1 who mentioned in one of his lectures that life is all about choosing the lesser evil. This principle was first put forward by Herbert Spencer as his concept of the "survival of the fittest." Thus, there is a constant struggle between the wealthy and the poor, the strong and the weak, the wise and the dumb, the naive and the sophisticated. Everyone competes with another and aims for success. Those who overcome the many challenges, by whatever means, right or wrong, become champions and they rule over everyone whom they have outshone.

In the context of Philippine politics, the fittest are those who have the wealth and the power to manipulate the many. The fittest are the politicians who often abuse their power and amass wealth several times the value of what they have spent on their campaign. To be fair, there were a few who performed very well, like Jovito R. Salonga, Jose Diokno and Lorenzo Tañada. But their breed now seems to be close to extinction.

During elections, candidates sell themselves to voters. They think of all possible means for attracting (and manipulating) voters to their side, including lousy propaganda. They really are good sellers. And many are also very good buyers—of voters and of officials in charge of the counting and canvassing of election results. When these vicious politicians gain power, they steal from government coffers twice or thrice or maybe five times what they have spent during the election. The law-abiding citizens pay taxes and then politicians "skillfully and masterfully" spend these taxes on useless projects or simply pocket the money. And this bizarre cycle has been going on for decades.

Stein mentioned a friend who simply decided to stop voting after he noted that none of those he had voted for got elected. "Democracy in this country (America) doesn't work," he said, "and it doesn't work because there are already too many ill-informed people voting. Politicians are able to push buttons. They make noise... and hundreds of thousands of voters follow like lambs to the slaughter. When people don't even know enough to vote their own self-interest, the system can't function smoothly."

This is what has been happening in our very own country for many years. Yet, nobody seems to notice or, if some people did, they just ignore it and choose the lesser evil.

Statistics show that millions of our young men and women today did not register for the election. One reason is that they were too busy working on the documents they need to go abroad where green pastures await. I have a different reason: While others say that one should exercise his right to suffrage, I say one has also the right not to vote.

The thought of being unregistered does not bother me at all. When I turned 18, I decided not to register. It was not because I did not want to exercise my right to suffrage but because I considered the candidates to be all evil and I didn't want to choose the least evil among them. I admired no one on the list of candidates, and it would have felt foolish voting for someone I did not trust. I did not vote then, and I still will not vote now. Not until somebody with integrity and credibility seeks the presidency.

During one election for the Supreme Student Council (SSC) in our university, a candidate for president who happened to be my classmate tried to drag me into voting for him. I told him I had never cast a vote since my first year. I was a student journalist and I wanted to be objective and impartial in writing every article. When he insisted, I told him firmly, "I don't want to vote for you because should you win and not perform well as SSC president, I will be one of those responsible for it." He was stunned, and he went away.

There are many voters who vote without giving some thought about whom they are going to vote. This is one of the many reasons the problems of our land remain unsolved. Stein's friend had a point, but I cannot agree with his solution, which is to administer an examination that would separate the well-informed from the ill-informed. He said this is necessary because American politicians are all "crooks" and the reason for this is that universal suffrage allows any idiot who is 21 years of age or older to vote.

Our problem is that Filipino voters have grown disillusioned and cynical. They think that one sack of rice, some canned fish and noodles or P500 given to them during election would spell the beginning of change in their lives. They believe that the superheroes of television and cinema would become superheroes of our country once they are elected to office and rescue them from their pathetic condition. They think that champion athletes would be able to beat the odds in real life just like they do in the ring or in other sports. They easily get swayed by the well-crafted slogans of the politicians posted everywhere, including places where they are not supposed to be.

There can be no improvement in our national condition when the Filipino voters are left with no choice but to pick the least among evils. For no government can be a good government when it is run by evil men and women.

Nurhatima Dumato Aljani, 21, is a fourth year BSBA management student at the Mindanao State University-General Santos City.

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Farcical benefits for workers

MALACAÑANG'S LABOR DAY ANNOUNCEment of non-wage benefits for workers was, not surprisingly, rejected by labor groups. (INQUIRER, 5/2/07) The announcement offered false hopes to workers who continue to face the threat of layoffs and joblessness.

For example, President Macapagal-Arroyo claimed that her administration was able to create one million jobs in 2006. What she did not say was that she failed to meet her target of generating one million jobs in each of the previous five years.

Secondly, the national government did not actually provide workers with benefits, considering that the money that will be spent will come from the GSIS, Pag-Ibig and SSS members' own contributions, deposits and earnings. The fact remains that the workers will have to pay back their loans even as they already have very limited income to cover their families' basic needs.

What Ms Arroyo deliberately chose not to mention was that the non-wage benefits will be useless to a large number of Filipinos simply because they do not have jobs in the first place; that 30 percent of the public sector employees will not benefit from GSIS loans because they will be laid off under the government's so-called rationalization program; that the jobs created in the past three years were mere replacements of vacated posts and not really new ones; that most of the jobs available are good for four to five months only, without security of tenure, and in less than six months down the road, the contractual workers will be back in the streets or attending more job fairs, again looking for work.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

The non-wage benefits will only drive more contractual workers, who have no real assurance of getting new jobs, to go after loans.

It would be interesting to note that the announcement comes after the Department of Budget and Management and the administration-dominated House's ways and means committee blocked the passage of a bill that would have given minimum wage earners tax exemptions. Filed immediately after the imposition of the expanded value-added tax, the bill sought to increase the amount of non-taxable income to P50,000 annually, with corollary increases in tax exemptions for every wage bracket. The bill was approved on third and final reading last year and a similar measure was approved by the Senate. However, the House ways and means committee refused to hold a bicameral conference to enact the bill.

The public has to know the real score behind these "non-wage benefits." These are not gifts from the administration but measures that the workers will still have to work for before they get to enjoy them.

—DANNY L. EDRALIN,
chair, Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL),
102 Scout De Guia St.,
Barangay Sacred Heart, Diliman, Quezon City

Del Rosario answered clamor of his constituents

I WRITE THIS LETTER ON BEHALF OF THE Del Rosario family of Davao del Norte in response to Ramon Tulfo's May 3 column.

It is not true that my uncle, Antonio O. Floirendo Sr. ("AOF") is supporting Gov. Yayong Gementiza. The relationship between my father and my uncle is too deep to be destroyed by petty gossip.

With AOF's blessing given through his son Antonio "Tonyboy" Floirendo Jr., my older brother Anthony, the current vice governor of Davao del Norte, was the one originally selected as the official Lakas-CMD gubernatorial candidate. However, before my brother filed his candidacy, rumors spread that Tonyboy was interested in the position. From the very start, Anthony made it clear that he would be more than willing to step aside in favor of our cousin, but Tonyboy repeatedly insisted he had no interest in running and his camp would support my brother. On Feb. 25, Anthony called Tonyboy, who pledged his support for my brother's decision.

Strangely, after Anthony filed his candidacy, the rumors about Tonyboy's interest in the governorship intensified. Tonyboy subsequently announced that AOF wanted him to run for governor, a fact never mentioned to us until then. Despite his disappointment, my brother graciously withdrew his candidacy because he did not wish "to divide the family."

This story would have ended here had it not been for the insistent letters and text messages sent to my father and brother from various sectors: the religious, the local politicians, business, women's and youth organizations, and most especially the common citizens.

Any person acquainted with my father's personality and value system knows that he is not capable of turning his back on anyone in their time of need. My father joined the race for governor because the people asked him to, period.

My family and I will always have utmost respect for AOF—not only for the windows of success he opened for my father, but also for the love he has showed us through the years. But I cannot—will not—stand aside and allow my father's good name to be smeared by people who cannot distinguish fact from fiction. It must not be forgotten that my father also played a considerable role in building the family business, and AOF himself has cited, on more than one occasion, my father's significant contributions. INQUIRER sources say that the Floirendos now refer to my father as an "ingrate." I do not want to dignify those rumors, but I will say that anyone referring to my father as such has no idea of whom he speaks.

Everything my father has done in his political career has been in the service of his constituents, and his actions in the last few months are just another example of his unwavering dedication to the people of Davao del Norte. I am certain that the citizens of our province will see the players of this bizarre circus for what they really are, and my father will ultimately prevail.

—RIA G. DEL ROSARIO,
50 Agusan Circle,
Insular Village Ph-1, Lanang, Davao City

How ALIF won party-list representation in 2004

ANG LABAN NG INDIGINONG FILIPINO PARTY List (ALIF) wishes to clarify certain points of the April 16 editorial of the INQUIRER.

1. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is ALIF's political base. Most of its executive officers and majority of its charter members are from the region.

2. ALIF ran for the first time during the May 10, 2004 elections. Even then, its nominees were not new in the political arena and in the operations and nuances of the party-list system.

3. In the 2001 elections, I was the first nominee of the LDP (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino) Party List, which obtained the minimum number of votes required for a seat in the 12th Congress. However, the Supreme Court disqualified the party list of LDP, together with those of the Lakas CMD and other political parties that participated in the 2001 elections.

4. I was the LDP chair for the ARMM until I resigned from the party in 2003 to organize ALIF. Because of this connection, a significant number of LDP leaders and supporters in the region endorsed and voted for ALIF in the 2004 elections.

5. My being a nominee of ALIF enhanced its chances of being elected. I have been involved in various electoral exercises in the region for more than three decades. I and my younger brother, Jerry M. Tomawis, were elected members of the regional legislative assembly for Central Mindanao before and after the Edsa I Revolution. My family has been prominently involved in transportation and related businesses in key cities in Mindanao. In fact, the Tomawis Transport is the biggest Muslim-owned transportation firm in the Philippines. Thus, we have the advantage of name recall.

6. The percentage of votes obtained by ALIF in the 2004 elections (22.5 percent of all the votes cast in the region) was definitely lower than the expected 40 percent-60 percent. Given the above-cited circumstances, in ALIF's view, the 22.5 percent was not a feat in itself, as reported by the PCIJ.

7. The other issues raised by the editorial have been explained by concerned Comelec officials. For example, on the allegation that in some areas the votes cast for the party list were more than the number of registered voters; this was because of the inclusion of new/additional voters, which was directed by competent courts.

8. The irregularities attributed to ALIF in the "Hello Garci" tape has no legal and factual basis. In fact, until now the authenticity of that spurious tape has yet to be established. At the time of the purported taped conversation, ALIF had already obtained the minimum number of votes required for a seat in the 13th Congress. What appeared to have been recorded in the wiretapped conversation pertains to other party lists. ALIF was definitely not a party and, it will never be a party, to any form of election fraud and irregularities.

—REP. ACMAD M. TOMAWIS,
Ang Laban ng Indiginong Filipino Party List,
House of Representatives, Batasan Hills, QC

Use of gov't vehicles by candidates in Laguna

I WAS QUITE SADDENED BY THE NUMBER of election-related violent incidents cited in the news report about the slay attempt on a vice mayoral candidate in Laguna. (INQUIRER, 4/23/07) But I was more appalled by the report that the victim, who just left a political rally, was using a government vehicle when he was ambushed on a Sunday.

The use of a government car in a political campaign was in utter disregard of *delicadeza*. It was a blatant show of corruption. It further confirmed my observation that government vehicles were being used in the last election campaign as "carrozas," festooned with posters and streamers, while blaring campaign slogans of favored candidates, if they were not used to transport partisans to political rallies. Even the vehicles issued to the barangays were not spared from the abuse of power.

In some cases, the red plates were removed from the vehicles so that they would not be immediately identified as public property.

—PEDRO DE GUIA,
Patria Village,
Barangay Del Remedio, San Pablo City

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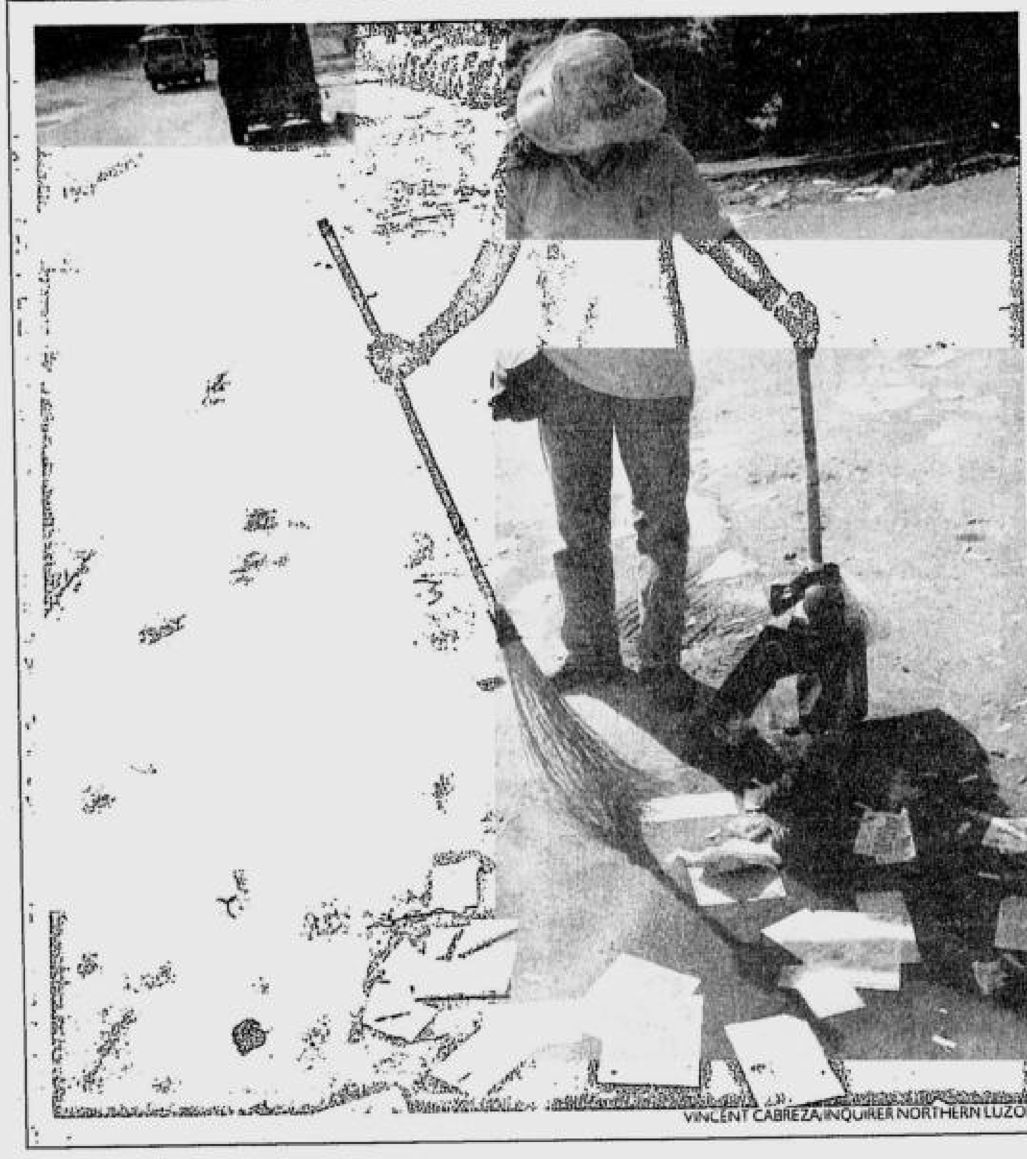

VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

DIRT FROM POLS
A Baguio street sweeper quietly cleans up after a last-ditch effort by a local candidate to draw attention. These bundles of campaign materials were scattered throughout a stretch of Session Road. Violations such as these are often overshadowed and forgotten as soon as the last ballots are cast.

De Venecia: Polls 'poisonous, dirty'

DAGUPAN CITY—Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. described the congressional elections in Pangasinan's fourth district as "destructive, very dirty, even poisonous" because of black propaganda and alleged massive vote-buying.

POLICE guard the Elguira Hospital in San Carlos City, Pangasinan prior to the transfer of a suspect in the killing of San Carlos Mayor Resuello in a campaign that Speaker Jose de Venecia described as the dirtiest he has taken part in in Pangasinan.
RAY ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

"I'm sorry that the last few days have been poisonous, destructive and negative politics and unprecedented vote-buying," De Venecia told reporters, shortly after casting his vote at Precinct 67A at the Bonuan Binloc Elementary School here.

"Almost every household, *inaakyat nila at namimili sila ng boto* (they would barge in and buy votes). This has never happened before in Pangasinan and in the district," he said.

De Venecia, who is running against Mayor Benjamin Lim, is now fighting his greatest political battle in the district since 1987, when then Vice Gov. Gonzalo Duque ran against him.

De Venecia said that when he fought Duque, the election was clean, "not as dirty and as massive in vote-buying as now."

"*Malinis* (It was clean). *Wala yong mga bilihan ng boto ng* (There was no vote-buying for) P1,000, P500, truck loads and truck loads of groceries, gift certificates, *tinapay* (bread)," he said.

"And this has been going on for two months. Shameful, very shameful. Shameful and shameless. They set a very bad example to our people," he said.

De Venecia said he ran his campaign based on "politics of performance."

He said he voted straight for the Team Unity senatorial slate.

Reached for comment, Lim said: "Look who's talking. Do you believe a *trapo* (traditional politician)?"

Lim and De Venecia had swapped disqualification charges at the Commission on Elections office here, accusing each other of massive vote-buying.

Before going to his precinct, De Venecia, his wife Gina and their supporters heard Mass at his house.

"We prayed even for our enemies, we prayed for Benjie Lim," he said.

Lim said he was exhausted by the 45-day campaign.

"I'm glad it's over, and I'm hopeful I won," he said.

Lim said he was frustrated that many of his supporters were disenfranchised and called on the Comelec to act on the reports.

Earlier, a group of concerned citizens urged voters in De Venecia's district not to vote for him and seek better alternatives.

Giving De Venecia another term would be a "choice that will not only affect the entire province, but the entire nation," it said.

The group conceded that De Venecia might easily retain the speakership, the fourth highest position in the country. *Gabriel Cardinoza, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes and Gesell Capua, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Troop 'overkill' in Bacoor slammed as poll races sizzle

THE HEAT OF RACES FOR LOCAL POSITIONS stretched into the last hours of the campaign on Saturday, leading to potentially deadly clashes, arrests and various forms of harassment by candidates against rivals in many parts of the country.

INQUIRER correspondents filed reports showing how closely contested some races are, adding argument to the saying that in politics, everything is local.

Bacoor, Cavite

In Bacoor, a suburb very close to Metro Manila, mayoral candidate Jessie Castillo condemned what he said was virtual militarization of the town as throngs of policemen and soldiers were sent supposedly to keep the peace during elections.

But Castillo's camp said the deployment of the soldiers was an overkill and meant to harass his supporters and people.

In an early morning raid, at least 60 of Castillo's supporters were taken in for questioning.

The move, said the mayor, was in support of the candidacy of his rival candidate, Strike Revilla, brother of Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr.

Earlier, police claimed they seized illegal campaign materials in the house of a Castillo

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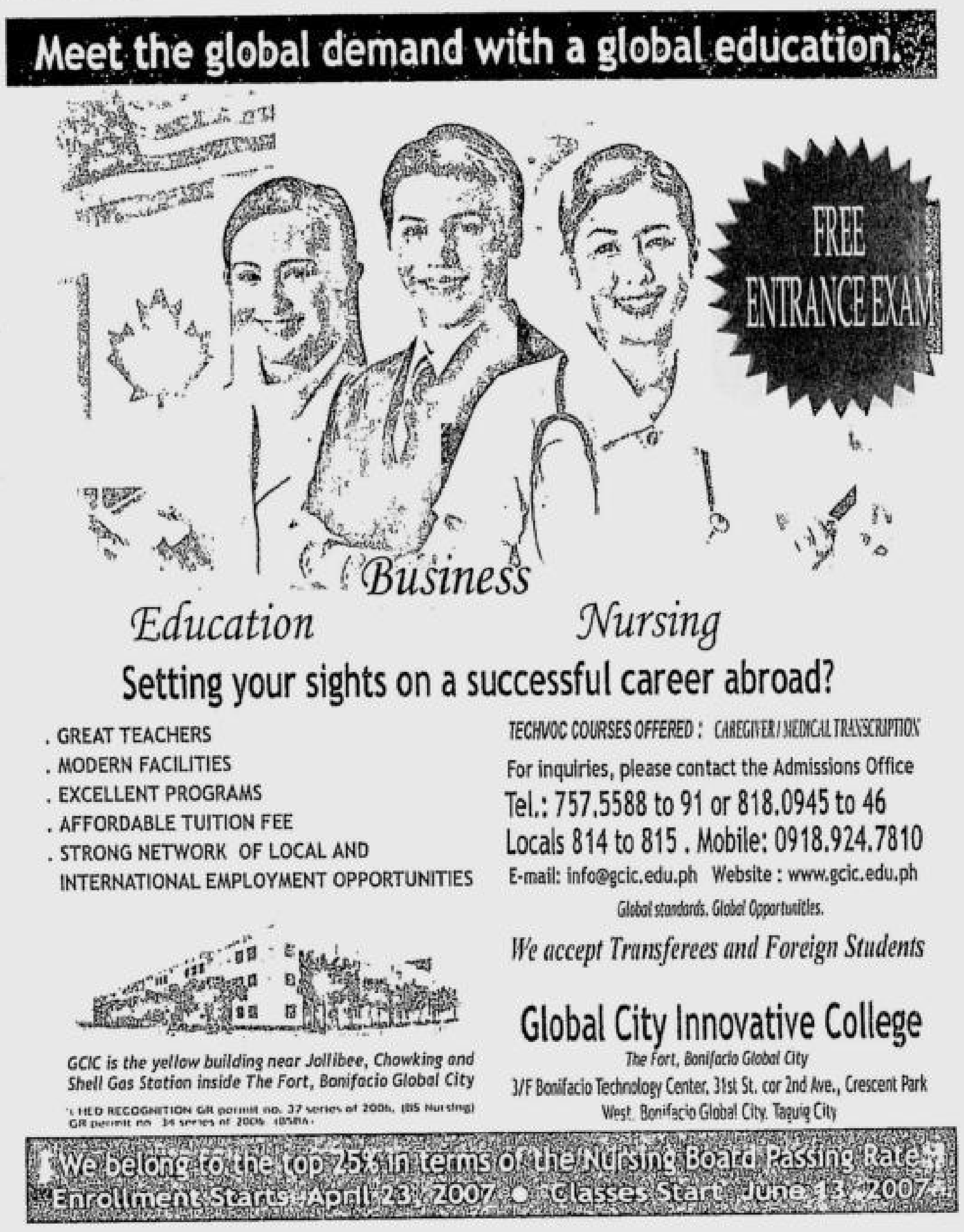

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Int'l observers take notice of Pampanga

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE INTERNATIONAL community has taken notice of elections in Pampanga, President Macapagal-Arroyo's home province, where a priest, an incumbent governor linked to graft and a board member linked to illegal gambling are seeking the province's highest post.

The group of international observers Olle Thorell, Cecilia Lero and Jim Heddle, all members of the Compact International Observers Mission, started its work on the day Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto issued a pastoral statement expressing "serious alarm" about the reported incidents of vote-buying and vote-selling two weeks ahead of May 14.

Aniceto urged voters to "express this option [of rejecting evil and choosing the good] more concretely by rejecting vote buyers and their money."

Aniceto's pastoral letter was read in Roman Catholic churches in Pampanga on Sunday. A Kapampangan version has been distributed in communities.

Swedish parliament member Thorell, University of New York law center researcher Lero, and documentary producer Heddle got a glimpse of the final campaign activities of candidates. May 12 was the last day of the 45-day local campaign period.

They were scheduled to monitor the Pampanga elections until May 16.

Compact said the mission was organized to "exert political pressures on the parties and candidates to refrain from resorting to violence and fraud during the elections and to get international support for the agenda of reforming the Philippine electoral system."

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

RAISE THE ROOF
Voters cast their votes under the roofless portion of a classroom in Camalig North Elementary School, Camalig, Albay, serving as a poll precinct. The classrooms have not yet been repaired since Supertyphoon "Reming" struck the Bicol region late last year.

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Troop . . .

From page A17

supporter. The raid, police said, yielded bags of rice and election paraphernalia.

Bulacan

In Bulacan, six people, including a brother of gubernatorial candidate Roberto Pagdanganan and two policemen, were arrested at a Comelec checkpoint in Calumpit town for carrying guns at 11:30 p.m. Sunday.

Senior Insp. Danilo Orendain, deputy investigation officer of the provincial police, said those arrested were Herminigildo Pagdanganan, 50; his security aides Ramon Robielos, Antonio Sales and Rodrigo Gonzales; and PO1 Michael Manalad and PO1 Lester Leda, both bodyguards of Pagdanganan.

Seized from them were a baby Armalite rifle, two 12-gauge shotguns, three .45 cal. pistols, and a 9 mm pistol.

Orendain said policemen flagged down Pagdanganan's group, who was on board two Nissan pick-up trucks, at a checkpoint in Barangay Bagbag in Calumpit.

Only the firearms recovered from the two policemen have permits and licenses.

Pagdanganan, a former governor, said it was a setup. His brother and his companions were on their way to Barangay Iba to check reports of alleged vote-buying, he said.

He said his brother's group were also checking the presence of flyers and leaflets claiming that he had withdrawn from the race.

Reelectionist Calumpit Mayor James de Jesus said the group of former Mayor Ramon Pagdanganan, another brother of Roberto, roamed Barangay Palimbang at 1:30 a.m. Sunday and terrorized his supporters.

Reports said Herminigildo confronted Palimbang village chief Alfredo Cruz and hit him with a rifle butt.

Cruz was taken to the hospital for treatment.

Pagdanganan denied the reports, saying his men were in Calumpit to stop vote-buying and the harassment of their supporters.

Nueva Ecija

In Nueva Ecija, two grenades were found on Monday in the front yard of the house of Melencio Alday, a mechanic, in Barangay Bitas in Cabanatuan City.

PO2 Abraham Rafanan said the grenades' pins were still intact when found at 5:30 a.m.

Senior Supt. Alfredo Caballes, Task Force Nueva Ecija commander, said the explosives could have been placed as an "act of intimidation."

It was not immediately known if Alday was a supporter of any particular candidate.

In Quezon town, violence nearly erupted when a 20-vehicle convoy, with two bulletproof vans, carrying gubernatorial candidate Aurelio Umali tried to force its way through a barricade set up by about 300 supporters of his rival, outgoing Vice Gov. Mariano Cristino Joson.

Umali's group was making the rounds of the towns on Monday and was on its way to a farm owned by an Umali supporter when it was stopped by Joson's supporters.

Quezon is a Joson stronghold and site of the headquarters of the local party, Bagong Lakas ng Nueva Ecija (Balane). Mariano Cristino chairs the party.

"One shot could have caused the eruption of violence in that area," Caballes said.

To everyone's relief, Joson's supporters allowed themselves to be persuaded by police to prevent the eruption of violence and let the convoy pass.

In Jaen town, police were filing charges of illegal possession of firearms against Emiliano Gajasan, 25, a supporter of reelectionist Rep. Rodolfo Antonino.

Gajasan, together with Antonino's driver, Benedicto Quisoy, 34, reportedly went to the farm of congressional candidate Gay Padiernos on Sunday to videotape activities in the compound.

They were shot at by Padiernos' men and taken to the hospital for treatment of leg wounds. However, when the police came, it was Gajasan who was found holding a gun.

Batanes

The top police official in Cagayan Valley re-

TROOP/ A20

Senator's hand seen in upset of PNP reshuffle

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Ranking officials of the Calabarzon police named pro-administration Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. as behind the deferment of the reassignment of a Cavite police director to Laguna as part of a major reshuffle of police officials in the region.

The temporary transfer of Cavite police chief Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas was meant to be part of an "experiment" of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

PNP chief Director General Oscar Calderon announced the reshuffle during a press briefing in Camp Crame last week.

Calderon said the move was aimed at ensuring that the local police would not be used by politicians in advancing their candidacies.

Calderon even announced that the experimental reorganization would first be implemented in the Calabarzon and will affect the provincial directors of Laguna, Cavite, Batangas and Rizal.

Quezon police director, Senior Supt. Hernando Zafra, was not included in the revamp as he had just assumed his position.

In the setup, the police director of Cavite would swap his position with the Laguna police chief, while the Rizal police director would exchange his post with the Batangas police chief.

The reshuffle was to be implemented from May 4 to May 20, Calderon had announced.

But during the turnover rites held here on Friday, journalists covering this camp were surprised when they were informed that Posadas was not included in the revamp.

Senior police officials, who declined to be identified to avoid being accused of politicking, told the INQUIRER that Revilla used his closeness with Malacañang to request for the retention of Posadas in his position.

The senator's action, they alleged, was aimed at influencing the local elections in favor of his brother, Strike, who is running for mayor of Bacoor town in Cavite and other political allies.

The INQUIRER repeatedly tried to get the reaction of Revilla to no avail.

A police official said Revilla, a former Cavite governor, also "wanted to ensure the victory of his brother in Bacoor."

The police officials were apparently referring to Strike Revilla, who is running for mayor of Bacoor under President Macapagal-Arroyo's party, the Kabalikat ng mga Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi).

One of the officials said the actor-turned-politician also requested Calderon to spare Posadas from the reshuffle.

Another source said the officials "pity" Calderon because the PNP chief's "sincere programs to cleanse the image of the police service was sacrificed for the greedy intentions of a politician."

'... (The) sincere program to cleanse the image of the police...was sacrificed for ... a politician'

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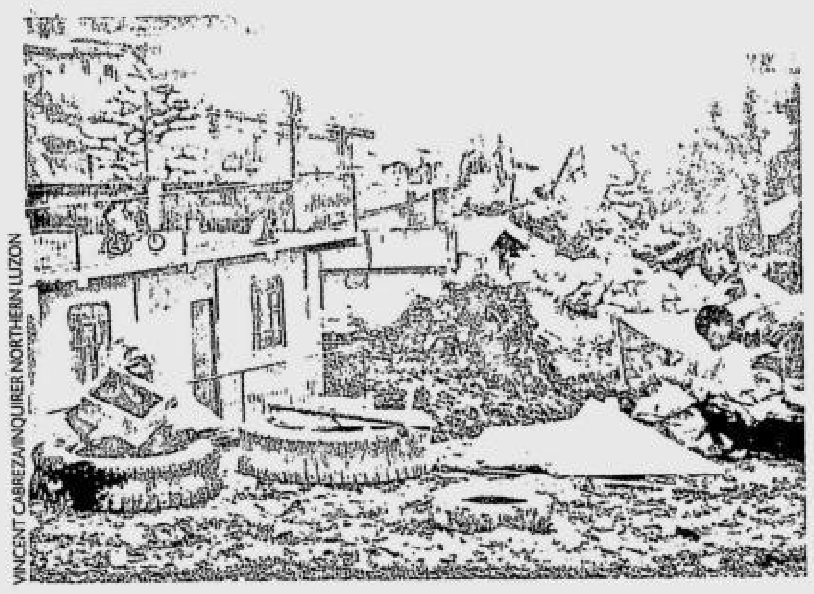

VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

THIS Baguio dump will finally close but the timing was questioned. The town of Tuba, Benguet, complained for decades about the pollution caused by garbage washed down from the dump and into their streams.

Baguio closes 35-year-old dump hosting voting village

BAGUIO CITY—THE CITY GOVERNMENT IS shelling out money for 26 families, who migrated from Payatas, Quezon City, to the summer capital's dump eight years ago, after they chose to return when it closed the facility on Friday.

Environment officials had ordered Baguio three years ago to close the dump for environmental violations.

The 35-year-old dump at Barangay Irisan had been the subject of complaints from the neighboring Tuba town in Benguet because garbage was often washed down from the five-hectare field to its villages.

Only 25 percent of the dump area will be used until the city builds a modern sanitary landfill in Tuba by 2009, said acting Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr.

Ulterior motive

Nazita Bañez, deputy city environment officer, said residents had started to recycle, causing a drop by 26 percent of the daily average of 288 tons of garbage being dumped in Irisan.

Bautista said "it took the city this long to correct a wrong," referring to the manner in which past administrations allowed the dump to deteriorate.

Bautista said the dump would be converted into an ecological park in two years.

But residents who observed the ceremony had mixed reactions to the dump's closure being timed at the end of the campaign season.

Irisan and this facility's community of scavengers are often targets of political campaigns because their village is the largest barangay in the city.

Except for Bautista, local candidates who went around the barangay with blaring campaign jingles on Friday were oblivious to the dump's fate.

Vote-changing

"Maybe, no one realizes this [act of closing the dump] will change our votes," a resident told her companions at the sidelines of the dump's ceremonial shut down.

She did not clarify whether the change of heart favors incumbent officials seeking reelection.

Many of the people who live on materials saved from the dump are going to be offered alternative livelihood programs, according to Betty Fangasan, city social welfare officer.

Village officials have been asked to build recycling centers in their communities.

Bautista said resolving the dump issue was part of his environmental agenda. But he said closing the dump now would elicit fresh relations between the city government and a new mayor in Tuba.

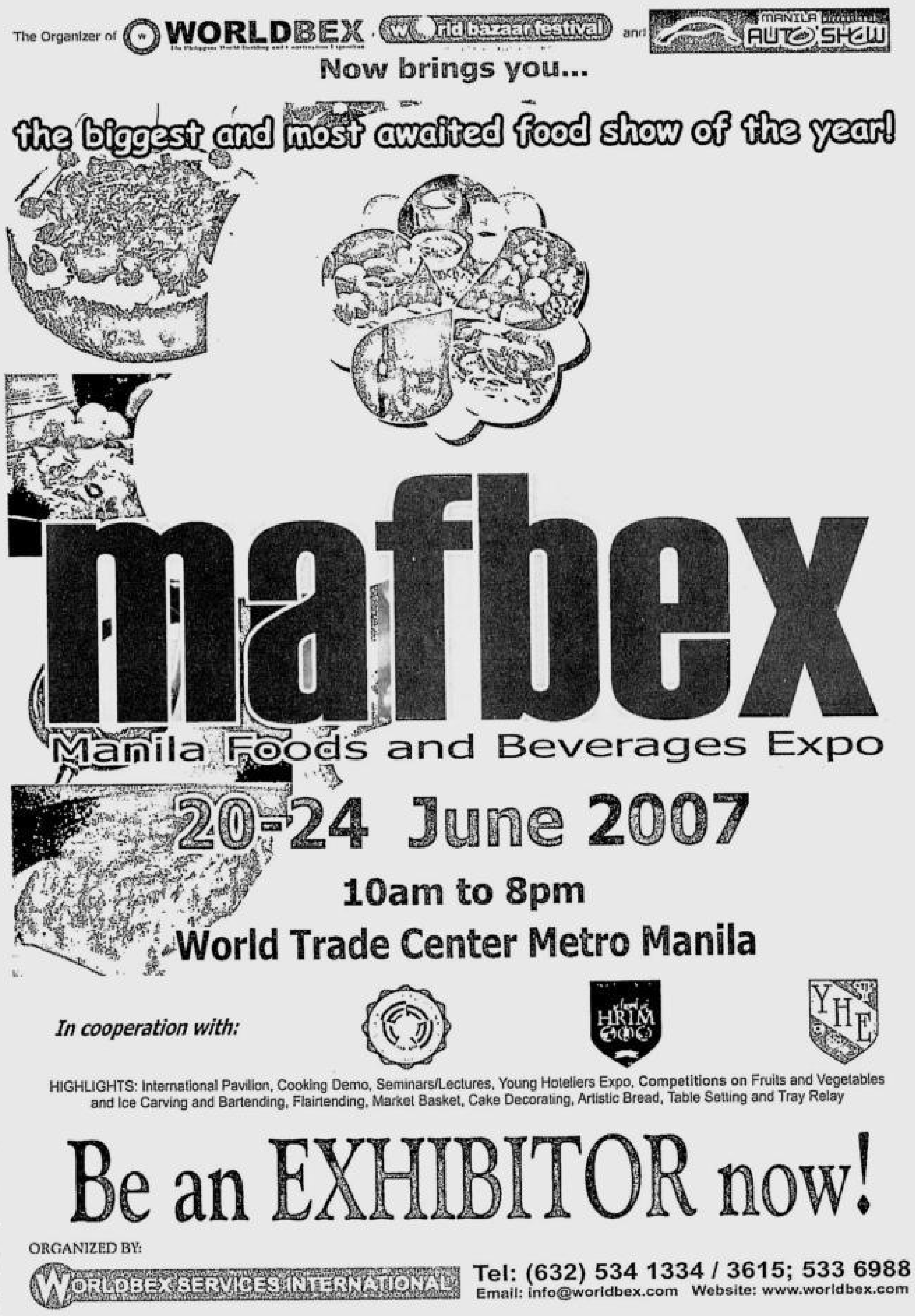
Tuba Mayor Jose Baluda ends his term in June, and is running for a seat in the Benguet provincial board.

Baluda sent Magdalena Niwane, municipal secretary, to represent him at the ceremony.

But Niwane said the town remains apprehensive about the city's plans.

"Putting up a sanitary landfill inside our town could also create pollution problems, but we hope to work closely with the city when it embarks on this project," she said.

Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon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Text messages become potent black prop tool

LEGAZPI CITY—POLITICAL RIvals have found a fast, easy and discreet way to pelt black propaganda at each other up to the last stretch of the campaign period—through text messaging.

Citizens have been receiving text messages, which earlier started as jokes or satires hitting some candidates.

But the closer it got to election day, the more serious these messages have become and some have turned into serious allegations.

Here are some of the contents of text messages that have sparked conversations among voters for the past three weeks—that two candidates are lesbian and gay and that a candidate gave P40 million to the communist New People's Army in exchange for harassing his rival.

Other text messages alleged that a candidate gave away motorcycles to village chiefs and money in his sorties and that another hoarded rice for typhoon victims so he could instead give them away during the campaign period.

Another message was that an aging candidate was seriously ill and was airlifted secretly to a hospital in Manila.

Former presidential chief of staff, Joey Salceda, who is running for Albay governor, has been alluded to in some of the text messages, but he shrugged them off.

He said the spread of black propaganda or mudslinging was usually practiced during elections and something not to be surprised about.

He said he did not take these things seriously. "Where is their proof? (Their allegations) are certainly not true. You have seen my campaign, it has been very clean."

The most recent black propaganda was that incumbent Gov. Fernando Gonzales, whose wife is running for mayor of Ligao City, had made an arrangement with Salceda for him not to contest the mayoral candidacy of the governor's wife in exchange for the withdrawal of the governor in the gubernatorial race in favor of Salceda.

"That's a big lie, a libelous allegation! I have never talked—and will never talk—to Salceda about such arrangement," an angry Gonzales said.

Imelda Cabañes, a voter and government employee, said she was one of those who received this kind of text message but it did not influence her choices.

Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Vote-buying rampant; costs from ₱50 to ₱1,500

By Inquirer Bureaus

VOTE BUYING.

It was virtually there wherever voters were to be found in many parts of the country.

It marked the conduct of the elections in these places that could best be described in three words—chaos, confusion, disorder.

Central Luzon

In Pampanga, reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid reported alleged vote-buying in Floridablanca, Sta. Rita, San Simon and Magalang towns, and the City of San Fernando.

The wife of a barangay captain was reported to have also distributed five kg of rice and P500 in Alasas, also in San Fernando.

Outages were reported in Guagua and Sasmuan.

The Lapid camp traced all these to the camp of his rival, Board Member Lilia Pineda and some candidates in her slate.

Interviewed before casting her vote at the Rizal Elementary School in Barangay Concepcion in Lubao, Pineda laughed off the allegations.

"We did not buy votes," she said.

Officials of the Pampanga Electric Cooperative blamed the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) for the brownouts, citing "some problems" in the transmission lines.

Most voters complained of difficulty in finding their names in voters' lists.

"It looked like there was a rumble of names. I took 30 minutes to find my name," said Angelito Manuel of Concepcion, Lubao.

In Bacolor, "flying voters" were herded to Bacolor at 9 a.m. They were reportedly taken from various resettlement sites.

Barricade in Pampanga

Sunday night in Pampanga was filled with tension.

The seven-hour standoff between supporters of Sto. Tomas Mayor Lucas Arceo and mayoral candidate Gloria Ronquillo ended at past 9 p.m. when lawyer Temie Lambino, Commission on Elections provincial supervisor, told police in the City of San Fernando to escort Arceo out of his compound.

Ronquillo's supporters, led by her husband and former Mayor Romeo Ronquillo, barricaded the compound after they monitored six jeeps of elderly people.

Romeo Ronquillo said Arceo brought them there to give them money and copies of sample ballots.

Willy Dayrit, vice chair of the Senior Citizens Federation in Sto. Tomas, denied receiving cash.

Lambino said he found no reason for Arceo to be held inside his compound.

Rumor mongering

In Bulacan, gubernatorial candidate Roberto Pagdanganan disputed reports in flyers and leaflets that circulated in the province yesterday that he had withdrawn from the race and had accepted a supposed offer of President Macapagal-Arroyo to become an ambassador to Russia.

Missing names, procedures

In Benguet, missing names became the biggest headache of voters in the elections. This time, though, the confusion was aggravated by disputes over election procedures.

Protests over the placement of voter secrecy folders were aired.

Others argued over who should place ballots in the ballot box—the chair of the BEI or the voter.

The elections also silenced vegetable trucks that disappeared at the biggest trading post in La Trinidad.

Traffic on Halsema Highway was smooth as the province's farmers and truckers from Metro Manila hurried their deliveries on Saturday and Sunday in time for the elections.

Gregorio Taag, coordinator of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) in La Trinidad, said the group's field volunteers reported that many voters decided to go home since they could not find their names.

Dead voters

In Pangasinan, reports of missing names in the voters' lists and vote-buying marred the conduct of elections.

Some voters in Dagupan City were irked over the presence of the names of their dead relatives in the lists.

Reports gathered by the INQUIRER showed vote-buying to be rampant.

Some candidates offered up to P1,500 per voter.

A resident said she could start a *sari-sari* store with all the grocery items she had received from politicians during the campaign period.

Dagupan Vice Mayor Alvin Fernandez went on radio to deny reports that his father, former Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr., had withdrawn from the mayoral race.

Text messages saying the elder Fernandez was supposedly sick circulated in the city on Monday.

Campaign materials, like sample ballots, pocket calendars and fans, littered school yards in the province. Some people, however, collected them to sell at junk shops for P5 a kilogram.

In Urdaneta City, a candidate for vice mayor continued luring voters on Monday by giving them snacks.

Cheating charges

In Ilocos Norte, the camps of Board Member Michael Keon and former Gov. Rodolfo Fariñas, both candidates for governor, traded charges of election cheating as voters trooped to the various precincts in Ilocos Norte.

In Isabela, some voters complained of missing names and the inclusion of the dead in the list, among others.

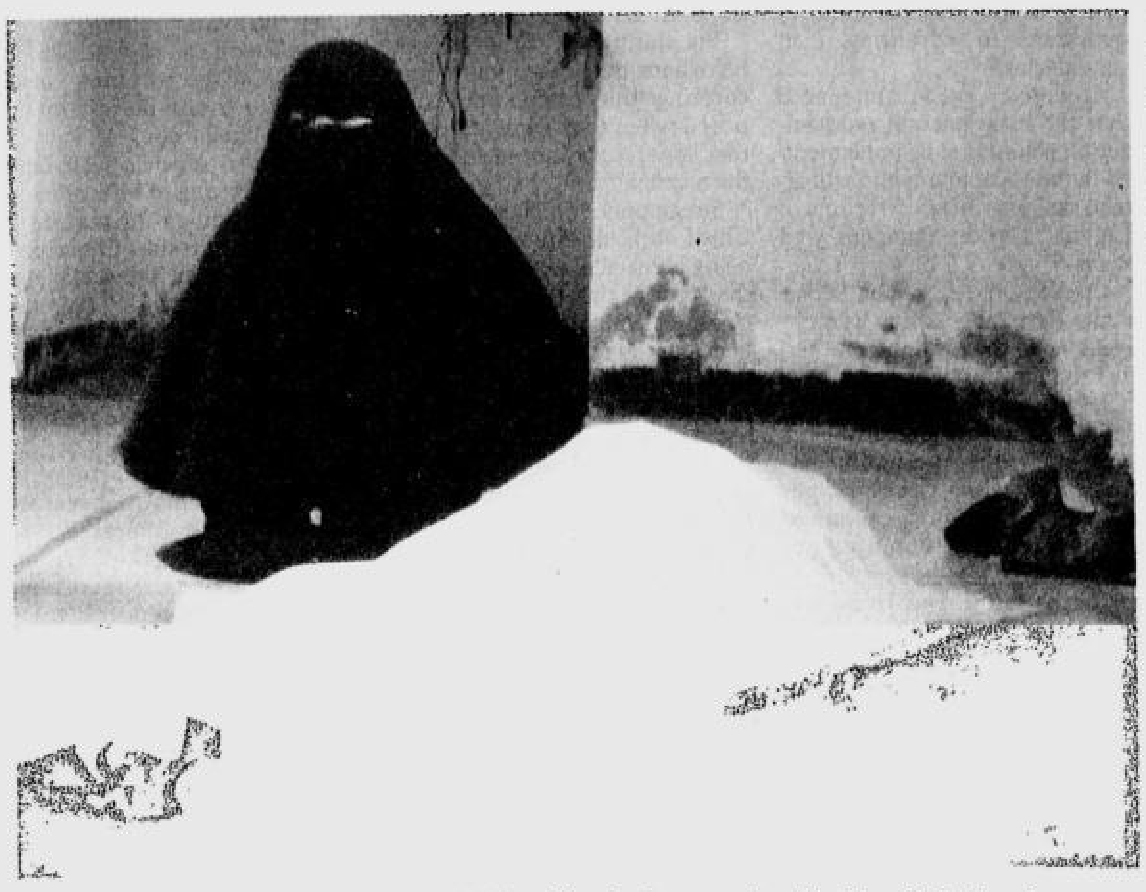
In Cagayan, reelectionist Gov. Edgar Lara asked Comelec officials to check the harassment of poll watchers in Alcala and Gattaran towns.

Few voters

In Zambales, PPCRV volunteers said in the villages of Lipay Dingin Panibuatan and Zone 5, polling precincts were closed as early as 1:45 p.m. as few voters cast their votes.

In Mt. Province, lawyer Dennis Dimalnat, Comelec provincial director, said they encountered problems in relaying information to their people in the field due to the poor signal of telecommunications providers in the towns of Besao, Barlig and Natonin.

Dimalnat said he received complaints from some residents who wanted their board of election inspectors replaced because of perceived bias. He said he also received reports of vote buying.



MUSLIMAH Jamiri, mother of Hudan Jamiri Jainuddin, the first casualty of the May 14 elections in Barangay Kaddayan, Tuburan, Basilan grieves over the body of her son.

JULIE ALIPALA/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Barefoot voter

Photographers disrupted voting for 30 minutes at a local school when they scrambled to take shots of Nicolas Cawed, a Burnham Park official, who arrived barefoot, wearing a woven G-string and a Bontoc headdress.

More Igorot candidates are seeking elective posts in Baguio and the fight is often between the original Ibaloi families of the city and politicians who hail from other parts of the Cordillera.

Some of their supporters voted wearing woven native vests.

Military vote

It was harder to gauge the political colors of Philippine Military Academy soldiers, who voted on Tuesday at the Fort del Pilar High School.

Some of these soldiers told the INQUIRER that they supported candidates with strong military backgrounds, including detained Lt. Senior Grade Antonio Trillanes IV and former Sen. Gregorio Honasan, both PMA graduates.

Cheaper votes

In Legazpi City, vote-buying since Friday until yesterday had been the common complaint of opposing parties.

The distribution of money enclosed in folded and stapled sample ballots usually occurred in houses of barangay officials.

On Sunday night, most villagers were still unusually awake although it was almost midnight as they waited for money from candidates.

A Church reminder written on streamers hanging at the gates of parishes, saying "Kristyano ako, dai mapabakal nin boto (I am a Christian, my vote is not for sale)" was ignored.

A resident of Barangay San Roque, speaking on condition of anonymity, said vote-buying prices ranged from P100 to P700.

She said the amounts given by the barangay officials and leaders of the candidates were smaller than the original amounts given by the candidates.

In Catanduanes, vote-buying rates were reported to be as high as P1,500.

Tricycle drivers in Legazpi also found sure income on Election Day as they were hired by politicians to ferry voters to and from polling places.

Abduction

A poll watcher of a mayoral candidate escaped an abduction in Sto. Domingo at 11:30 a.m.

Erwin Gregorio, a poll watcher of mayoral candidate Herbie Aguas, reported that unidentified men were forcing him into a Honda Civic car.

The abductors did not succeed when some bystanders came, forcing the suspects to run.

In San Jacinto, Masbate, municipal councilor and reelectionist Lito Real died of a heart attack yesterday morning.

In Paluan, Occidental Mindoro, truckloads of Mangyan voters, identified by their name tags and precinct numbers, were ferried to polling places.

Tension was high when the lawyer of incumbent Paluan Mayor Abe Pangilinan twice confronted media persons from the Imbestigador of GMA 7, accusing them of disturbing the "peaceful elections."

Pangilinan's lawyer also confronted Margarita Tamunda, from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Manila, who told the Inquirer that she was shocked to see how Mangyans were being manipulated by candidates as they were brought to a poblacion school in groups and with Tagalog-speaking people telling them what to do.

In Palawan, the usual problem was missing names in the list of voters.

Watchers ousted

In Barangay Sulib, Pangil town in Laguna, volunteers of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting caused the expulsion of extra poll watchers of a candidate inside a precinct.

There were four watchers instead of just one allowed by the Comelec.

In Calamba City, the brother-in-law of a Calamba City mayoral candidate was arrested on Monday for allegedly roaming within the polling precincts with a gun, police said.

Police said barangay officials had seen Eleno Tercero near the polling precincts with his .45-cal. pistol since 11 a.m.

Reports of massive vote buying and other irregularities marred elections in Quezon.

In Lipa City in Batangas, the campaign period for local candidates might have lapsed Saturday midnight, but hundreds of election volunteers in this city continued to give away election materials, ranging from sample ballots to flyers and leaflets.

In Cavite, despite their political differences, reelectionist Gov. Erineo "Ayong" Maliksi said he voted for his erstwhile political ally, reelectionist opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who is also his townmate.

More vote buying

Vote buying was also rampant in Iloilo and Negros Occidental.

Election watch groups were swamped with SMS messages and calls regarding vote buying, blamed on both administration and opposition camps, said Msgr. Meliton Oso, coordinator of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) in Iloilo.

The prices ranged from P50 to P500.

In Iloilo City, the designation of a new election officer to head the board of canvassers (BOC) and the appointment of new city prosecutor has raised fears of massive cheating.

Liberal Party congressional candidate for the lone district of Iloilo City Vicente Gengos expressed concern over the assignment of lawyer Nelia Aureas as chair of the board of canvassers (BOC) and the designation by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales of lawyer Peter Baliao as acting city prosecutor. Gengos is challenging Gonzalez's son, Raul Jr.

He also said that they were now checking the background of Aureas, who is not from Iloilo City.

"We will make our move when the BOC convenes," Gengos added.

There were also reports of vote buying in other areas in the Visayas.

In Guimaras, the Philippine National Police 6th regional mobile group intercepted eight men carrying 155 small envelopes containing cash at Barangay Lapaz, Nueva Valencia town, Guimaras at 11:40 Sunday evening.

Nueva Valencia election officer Romulo Mataquel said the eight were suspected of buying votes but refused to say the name of candidate. The eight were released 2 p.m. Monday.

In EB Magalona, Negros Occidental, armed men entered four farms in Barangay Tanza and placed indelible ink on the fingers of the farm workers, who are supporters of Mayor Alfonso Gamboa, so they could not vote.

The workers were given P200 each and were told to stay home.

In Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental, the police arrested Minda Mojana, 54, for vote buying in Barangay Cardioan. Mojana allegedly had five envelopes containing P300 each and sample ballots of mayoralty candidate Allain Gatuslao.

The police also arrested Domingo Picot, a political leader of Jechonias Manzano, a mayoral candidate of Candoni town, Negros Occidental, also for vote buying. Recovered from his possession were sample ballots and P4,200 in cash.

In Cebu, Central Visayas regional elections director Ray Rene Buac said there were reports of vote buying but they could not get confirmation since nobody wanted to testify.

Reporters who covered the different schools in Cebu City heard talk from voters that they received P150 each from a congressional aspirant.

A barangay captain in Cebu City also allegedly hired almost 20 jeeps to ferry voters to and from their polling precincts, while the candidates' leaders also distributed sample ballots, bread and juices in the different schools.

In Southern Leyte, both Lakas-Kampi and the National People's Coalition-Liberal Party engaged in vote buying two nights before Election Day.

The two parties gave out P500 to voters. *Reports from Tonette Orejas, Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon, and Leoncio Balbin Jr., Gabriel Cardinoza, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Cristina Arzadon, Desiree Caluza, Vincent Cabreza, Elmer Kristian Dauigoy, Gesell Capua, Daryl Dauden, Angelico Soriano, Sheba Espino, Thushara Navimana, Angelica de Vera, Katrina Cabanela, Francia Noguera and Rona Ortiz, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Madonna T. Virola, Juan Escandor Jr., Ephraim Aguilar, Niña Catherine Calleja, Romulo O. Ponte, Marlon Ramos, Marlon Luistro, Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Robert Bagalay, Gerald Gene Querubin and Nino Jesus Orbeta, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Jhunnex Napallacan, Jolene Bulambot, Carla Gomez, Jani Arnaiz, Joey Gabieta, Nestor Burgos Jr., Hazel Villa, Ma. Diosa Labiste, Romy Amarado, Cynthia Borgueta-Pease, Cyrain Cabueñas, Alex Pal, David Israel Sinay and Felipe Celino, Inquirer Visayas*

BALLOT SECRECY FOLDER

MARIA Consuelo Dumandan casts her vote in Don Juan Dela Cruz Central Elementary School in Davao City with her daughters beside her.

BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Troop 'overkill' in Bacoor slammed . . .

From page A18

lieved the police director of the island-province of Batanes on Sunday following a supposed ambush on a candidate in the lone congressional district seat in the province on Saturday.

Chief Supt. Ameto Tolentino, Cagayan Valley police director, said he relieved Senior Supt. Rolando Macusi after Carlo Diasnes, a candidate of the administration Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), reported that he was wounded when his vehicle was shot at by unidentified men on his way to Mahatao town on May 12.

Tolentino, who cited "command responsibility" in Macusi's relief, appointed Senior Supt. Segundo Duran as the new police director.

Diasnes, in text messages sent to the INQUIRER, said he did not report the incident to the police, claiming that Macusi was "biased" against him.

Diasnes said he did not seek treatment in the hospital and claimed that he himself treated his bullet wounds.

Batanes Bishop Camilo Gregorio said the facts surrounding the incident "did not point or give credence to an ambush."

La Union

In La Union, a candidate for councilor in Bangar town was arrested when he shot a policeman at a checkpoint in Barangay Ubbog on Sunday.

Police said Martin Lopez, 46, was driving a motorcycle when policemen signaled him to pull over. But Lopez proceeded to approach the checkpoint and drew a handgun from his waist.

Lopez, who was shouting "*Magkakamatayan na tayo, desperado na ako* (There will be bloodshed, I'm desperate)," shot but missed PO3 Sammy Lucero.

Reports said Lucero returned fire but missed Lopez, who fled after leaving his motorcycle near the checkpoint.

Police later arrested Lopez and recovered a .45 cal. pistol from him. He is facing charges of violation of the election gun ban and frustrated murder.

In Bauang town, police on Monday arrested two Army reservists for creating tension and intimidating residents of Barangay San Agustin.

Recovered from Diosdado Aleroso and Joselito Aleroso were two .45 cal. guns and bullets.

Police said they received a call at 2 a.m. informing them about the presence of armed men aboard two vehicles roaming San Agustin.

Reports said the suspects are supporters of Rep. Tomas Dumpit, who is running for governor.

Band vocalist threatened

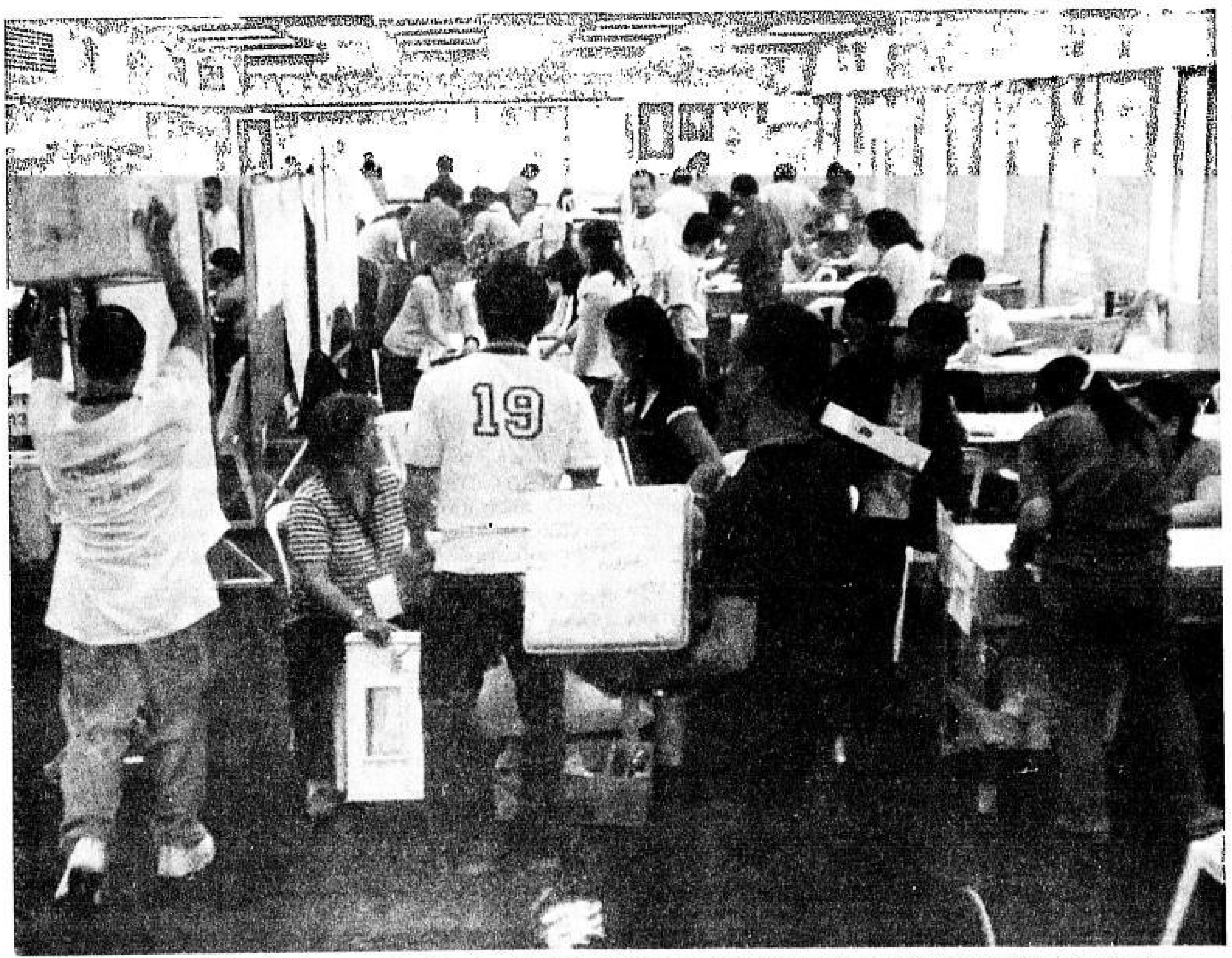
In Bangued, Abra, a supporter of a mayoral candidate in Daguioman town on Monday said the former mayor there threatened her when she captured on video an incident of alleged cheating in the area.

Carol Bello, a poll watcher of Daguioman mayoral candidate Lyndon Basingan and the lead vocalist of the Pinikpikan Band, said she was warned by former Mayor Manuel Co Kue, husband of incumbent Mayor Sally Co Kue, that the singer could not leave Daguioman alive after videotaping evidence of ballot tampering.

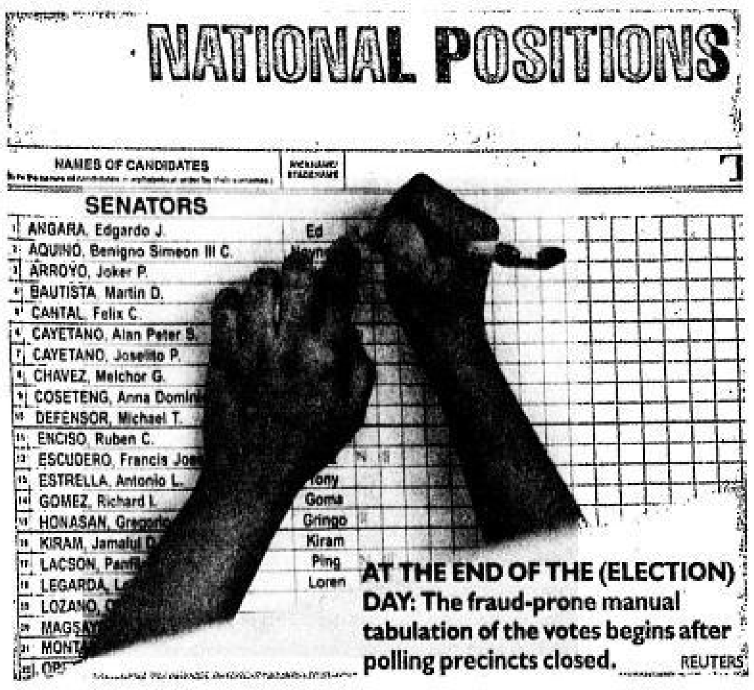
"*Ako daw ay di makakalabas sa Daguioman nang buhay dahil may* photo *at* video *ako ng kalokohan ng* mayor and her family (They threatened me that I cannot leave Daguioman alive because I have photographs and video footage of irregularities committed by the mayor and her family)," Bello told the INQUIRER.

Bello, whose husband is a resident of Daguioman, said she had affidavits of other witnesses and video footage of the fake ballots.

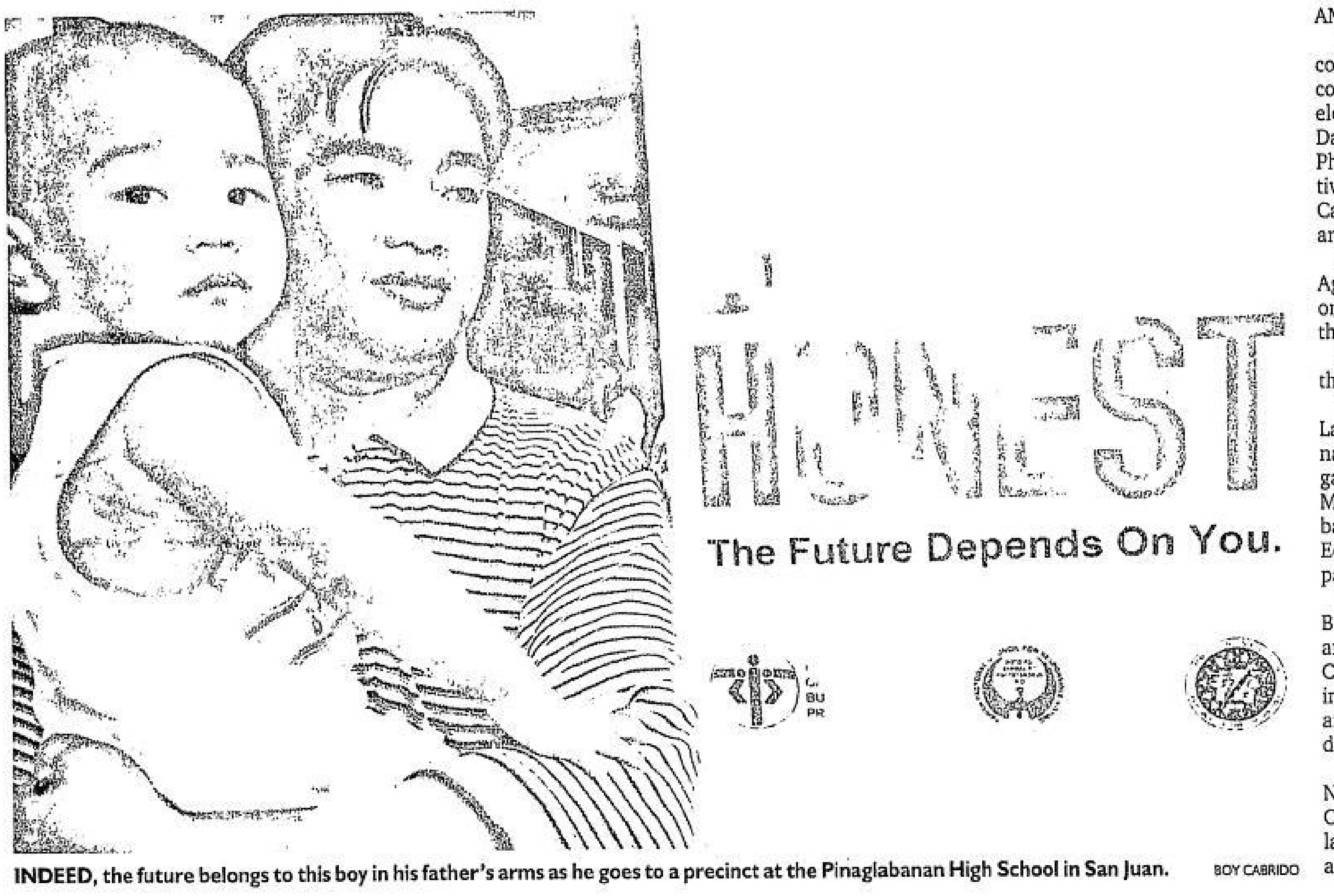
Co Kue is a supporter of outgoing Gov. Vicente Valera while Basingan is a member of the opposition Bangon Abra coalition led by gubernatorial candidate Eustaquio Bersamin, the brother of slain Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. *Reports from Hanna Lacsamana, Carla Dumo, Hanna Lacsamana, Villamor Visaya Jr. and Juliet Cataluña, Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Carmela Reyes, Anselmo Roque and Russell Arador, Inquirer Central Luzon and Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



CALL to order, please: It's a chaotic scene at the Comelec office in Intramuros as employees distribute ballot boxes for the counting of the absentee votes. Who's in charge here? JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



AT THE END OF THE (ELECTION) DAY: The fraud-prone manual tabulation of the votes begins after polling precincts closed. REUTERS


HONEST
The Future Depends On You.

INDEED, the future belongs to this boy in his father's arms as he goes to a precinct at the Pinaglabanan High School in San Juan. BOY CABRIDO

GO bets take early 8-2-2 lead

From page A1

A total of 385,148 votes covered in the quick count came from 4,162 precincts, representing 1.35 percent of 308,222, the total number of precincts in the country.

The partial results were drawn from precincts in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao, or 17 percent of the areas covered by AMA's network of schools.

AMA is conducting the quick count for "Eleksyon 2007," the coverage of the local and national elections by GMA 7, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PLDT, Smart, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Newsbreak, Catholic Media Network, dzBB and GMA New Media Inc.

AMA is owned by Amable Aguiluz V, presidential consultant on computer education during the Estrada administration.

Aguiluz is now special envoy to the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The partial results came from Laoag in Ilocos Norte, San Fernando City in La Union, Tuguegarao in Cagayan, Malolos and Meycauayan in Bulacan, Cabanatuan and Gapan in Nueva Ecija, and Angeles City in Pampanga.

Batangas City and Lipa in Batangas; Bacoor, Dasmariñas and Rosario in Cavite, San Pablo, Calamba, Biñan and Santa Cruz in Laguna, Antipolo City, Cainta and Taytay in Rizal, Oriental Mindoro and Palawan.

Albay, Legazpi City, Camarines Norte, Daet, Camarines Sur, Naga City, Sorsogon, Sorsogon City, Aklan, Bohol, Cebu, Eastern Samar and Leyte.

Cagayan de Oro, Davao City, South Cotabato, General Santos City, Koronadal, Butuan, Surigao City and Surigao del Norte.

Since 1987, AMA has been making use of its campuses in the different parts of the country for its partial unofficial count of the election results.

To cover 82 municipalities

For this year's quick count, AMA will cover 82 municipalities and cities in 43 provinces, representing 13.1 million out of the more than 45 million registered voters nationwide.

The areas covered by AMA are concentrated in Metro Manila, Central Luzon, Calabarzon and the Bicol Region.

Also covered are some parts of the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, the Cordillera Administrative Region, Western Visayas and Mimaropa.

The Visayas and Mindanao are also represented, albeit limited to a few major cities.

AMA does not have a school in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The computer school is conducting the quick count from the precinct level up to the city and provincial levels.

Election tallies are sent to the nearest AMA campus, then to the AMA Data Center, where the encoding and the quick count take place.

A summary report is then prepared and regular updates on the tabulation are sent to partner media companies for broadcast and publication.

AMA is expected to wind down its tallies this midnight. *Inquirer Research*

Pampanga priest leads gov race despite black propaganda

From page A1

"Our front-page story today is titled 'Former mayor linked to vote-buying.' Those anti-Panlilio stories are definitely not Sun.Star's," Laus told the INQUIRER.

Panlilio emerged as the third force, fielded by Catholics who wanted an "alternative moral choice." His candidacy upset what was thought to be a fight between the incumbent Lapid, son of Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, and Pineda.

Laus said he had instructed the managers of dwRW radio and CLTV 36, which he also owns, to disclaim ownership of the fake copy and to give time to Panlilio and his lawyers to dispute the reports.

Reached by phone in Minalin town where he voted, Panlilio called the reports "untrue, malicious and libelous."

"I pity whoever among my rivals was behind this highly irregular act. They are badly motivated for they spread lies. I really pity them," Panlilio said.

Because a number of voters in Pampanga had rejected money offered by candidates and had chosen instead to follow the dictates of their conscience, Panlilio said he believed he still had "very good chances" of winning the governor's post.

FEELING THE PULSE: Pakistani political scientist Mossarat Qadeem, a member of the 21-strong foreign observer team deployed in Mindanao, listens to feedback from a voter in Marawi City. RYAN D. ROSAURO/INQUIRER MINDANAO

De Venecia vs Lim

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. described the congressional race in Pangasinan's fourth district as "destructive, very dirty, even poisonous" because of black propaganda and alleged massive vote buying. *(See story on Page A17.)*

"I'm sorry that the last few days have been poisonous, destructive and negative politics and unprecedented vote-buying," De Venecia told reporters, shortly after casting his vote at Precinct 67-A at the Bonuan Binloc Elementary School in Dagupan City.

De Venecia, who is running against Mayor Benjamin Lim, is now fighting his greatest political battle in the district since 1987, when then Vice Gov. Gonzalo Duque ran against him.

Arroyo vs Mabulo

With the major national networks mounting satellite relay communications facilities a week before Election Day, the electoral race was focused on the bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo's son, Dato Arroyo, against a small-town politician, Mayor Sabas Mabulo of San Fernando town, for congressman of the first district of Camarines Sur.

Considered the underdog in terms of resources and machinery, Mabulo bewailed alleged massive vote-buying for Arroyo on the eve of the polls as reported by his supporters in Pasacao, Libmanan and Sipocot towns.

He claimed that the voters were handed P200, P300 and P500 bills from the local chapters of the Lakas-CMD and Kampi.

Reached by mobile phone, Ower Andal, Arroyo's campaign manager, sent a text message saying that his camp had nothing to do with the allegations.

He said Arroyo, accompanied by his wife Kakai, cast his vote at 9 a.m. at the Potot Elementary School in Precinct No. 0209.

Santos vs Sanchez

Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto, a Batangas gubernatorial candidate of Lakas-CMD, met Board Member Mark Leviste in a chance encounter as she cast her ballot with her husband, Sen. Ralph Recto, at the Inosluban Marawoy Elementary School in the city.

Leviste, running-mate of Santos' rival Gov. Armando Sanchez, was already at the voting precinct at around 8:30 a.m. and was able to vote within 15 minutes. Ralph and Vilma reportedly arrived at around 9 a.m.

In a phone interview, Leviste said he greeted the couple and wished them good luck, which they accepted. They shook hands and parted ways, he said.

Santos, an actress-turned-politician, is locked in a four-cornered fight with Sanchez, retired Gen. Nestor Sanares and Marcos Mandanas. At press time, the actress was leading the pack.

Padaca vs Dy

Reelectionist Gov. Ma. Gracia Cielo Padaca of Isabela and her rival, former Gov. Benjamin Dy, cast their votes in their hometown in Cauayan City.

Dy, 54, cast his vote at Precinct 17-A in San Fermin Elementary School at about 8:30 a.m. while Padaca cast her vote at Precinct 9-A at the Cauayan South Central School in Cauayan City at 10:30 a.m.

Robredo vs Villafuerte

Naga City mayoral candidate Jesse Robredo withdrew the candidacy of his wife Leni on Saturday to face Jojo Villafuerte of President Macapagal-Arroyo's party, Kabalikat ng mga Mamamayang Pilipino, in a one-on-one fight.

Robredo said the Commission on Elections' "quo warranto" order on him had been stalled as he had filed a motion to the en banc body.

Lee vs Lees

Sorsogon gubernatorial candidate Dr. Inocencio Lee Jr. and his father, engineer Inocencio Lee. Sr., who is running for mayor of Sorsogon City, were both declared nuisance candidates by the Comelec's second division.

The case against Lee Sr. was filed by another mayoral candidate, Robert Rodriguez Lee, and that of Lee Jr. by gubernatorial candidate Sally Lee.

The resolution became final and executory after the respondents failed to file a motion for reconsideration within three days from promulgation of the resolution.

Hagedorn vs Matillano

Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn of Puerto Princesa City disputed a statement circulating in polling places on Election Day that he had been disqualified from seeking reelection.

"Should there be any candidate who is disqualified, the announcement will come from us," said acting city election officer Jocelyn Postrado.

Supt. David Martinez, city police chief, said in a statement that the only report that reached his office was the disinformation campaign allegedly coming from supporters of mayoral candidate Eduardo Matillano, Hagedorn's opponent. *Reports from Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon; Gabriel Cardinoza, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Gesell Capua, Villamor Visaya, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Johnny Escandor, Bobby Q. Labalan, Robert Bagalay and Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

ELEKSYON 2007

BALLOT goes to Ramon Perez as he can't climb a flight of stairs to get to his precinct in the Special Education Center in Baguio. VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

STANDING UP FOR HIS RIGHT: His disabled legs are no hindrance for this man to vote at the Travesia Elementary School in Albay. JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

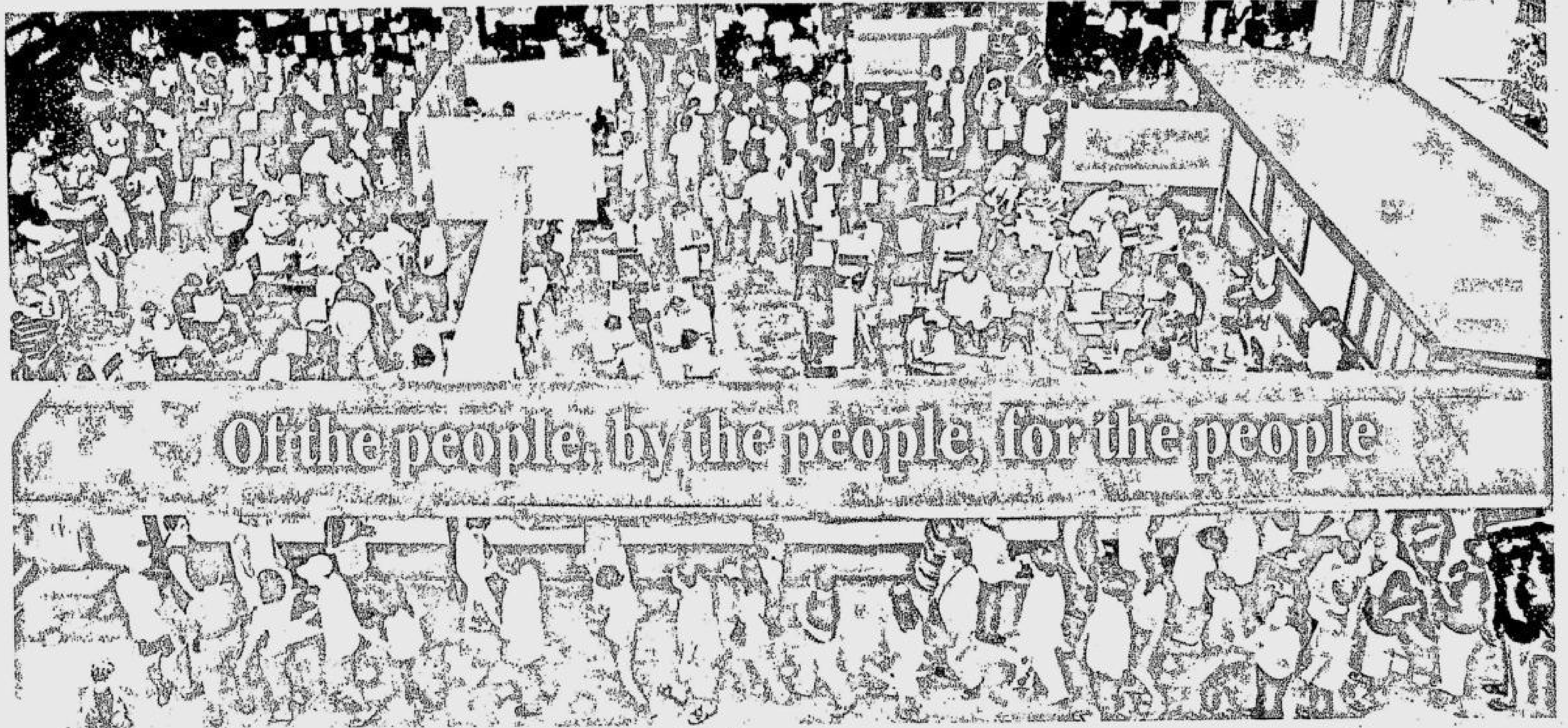
MOTHER casts her vote for the future of her child. RAFFY LERMA

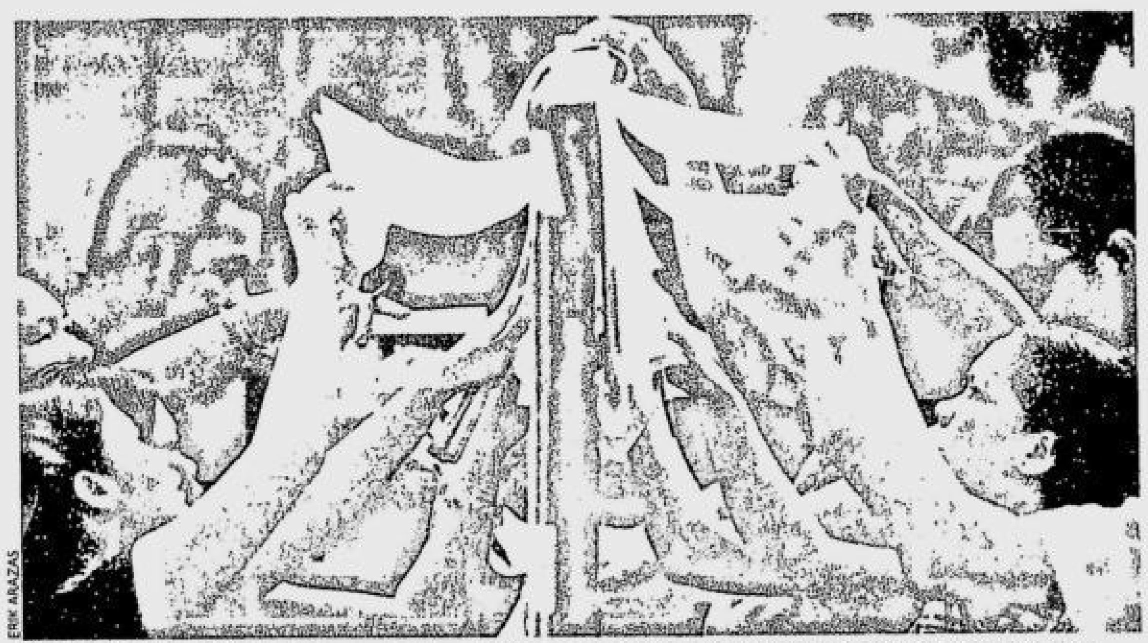
G-STRING POLITICS: Nicolas Cawed has been voting in Baguio wearing the traditional garb of the Mt. Province for decades. VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

NEVER TOO OLD to do one's duty as a citizen of a free country, Mary Labasano of Juna subdivision in Matina, Davao City, is 88. BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

PHYSICALLY challenged, Rowena Cruz still casts her vote at Rizal High School. RYAN LIM

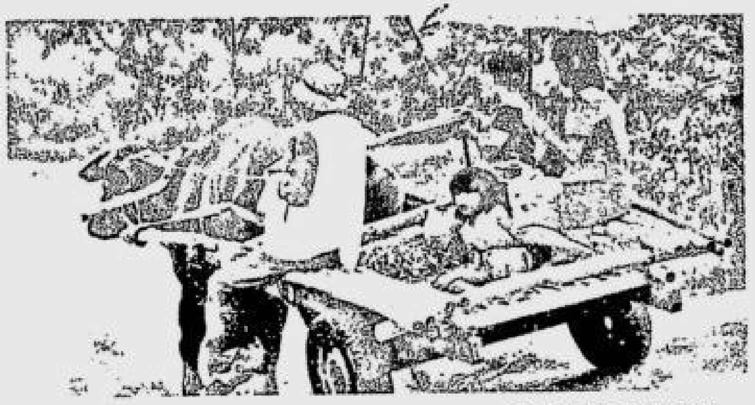
Of the people, by the people, for the people


THAT FIESTA FEELING: Voters wait for their turn to vote at the cavernous Trinity Elementary School, E. Rodriguez St. in Quezon City. Being a holiday, Election Day was also an occasion for rest and recreation. ARBULLIT MARQUEZ

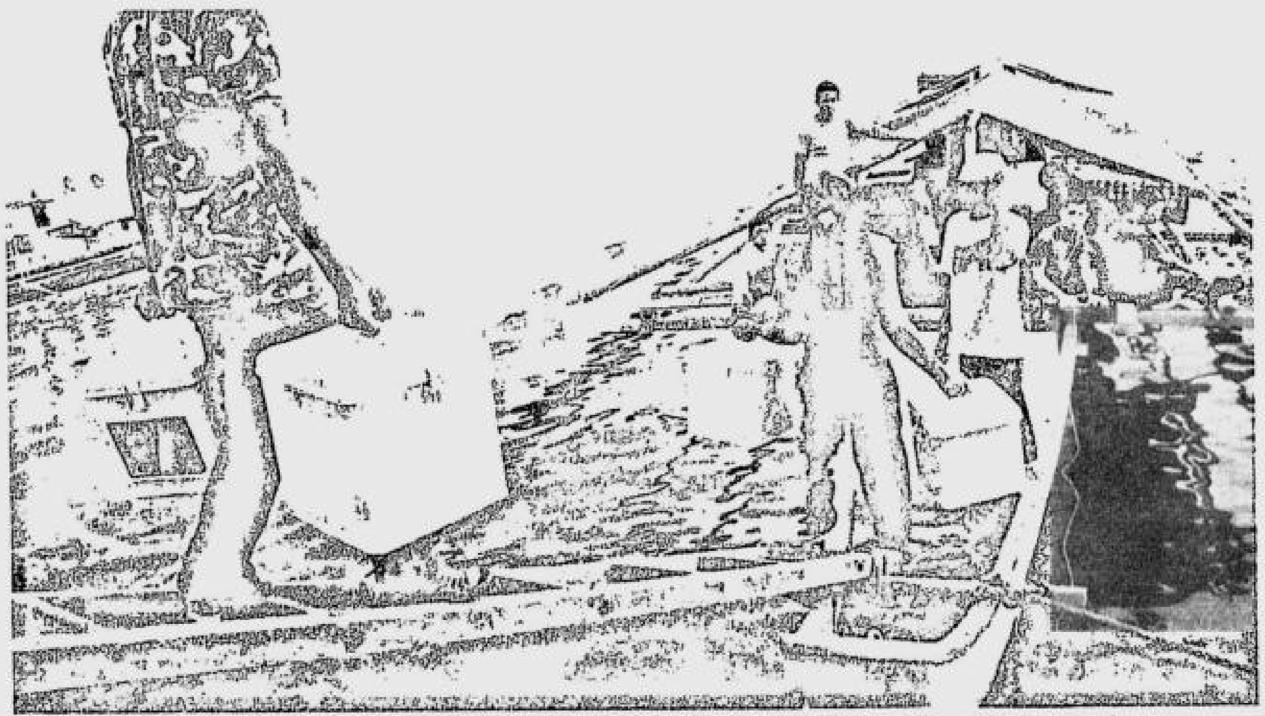

ERIK ARAZAS

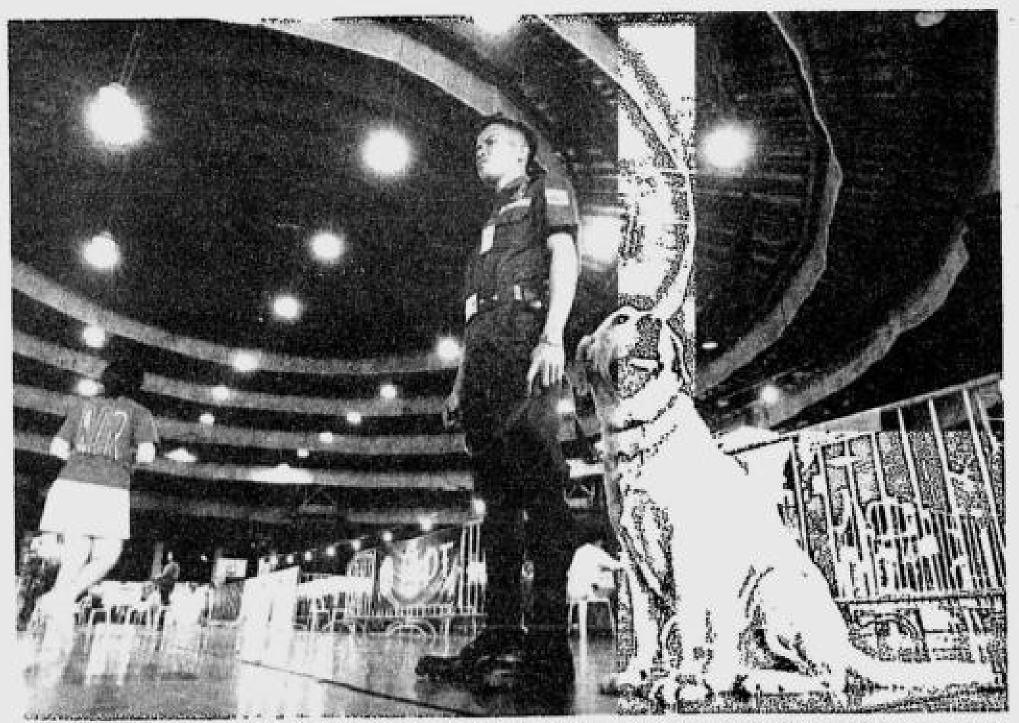
WHERE'S MY NAME? This is the root of the confusion among voters in the first 3 hours of the elections to include even the Comelec chair himself, Benjamin Abalos who had a hard time searching for the precinct with his name on it.

> The nation went to the polls with high hopes and a lot of prayers that this time we, the people, have finally got it right and good.

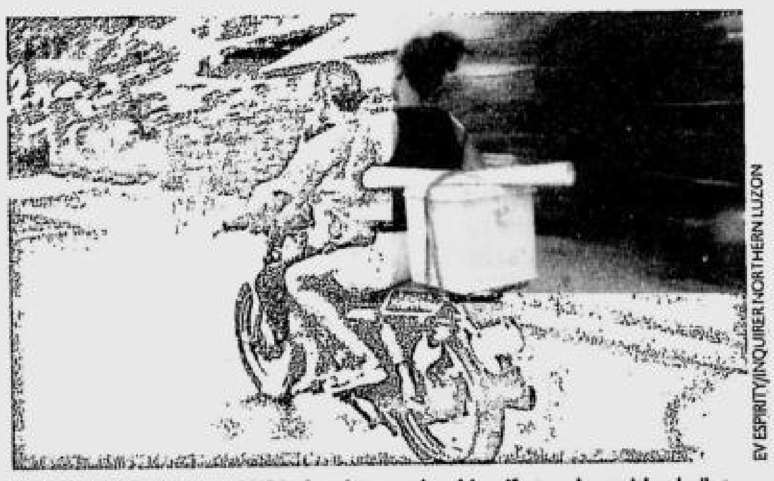

CARABAO-DRIVEN cart ferries this family across rough terrain to vote in their precinct in Floridablanca, Pampanga. AFP

ANOTHER widow in Abra: Corazon Gonzales, wife of Eduardo Gonzales, barangay chief of Bucay town. AFP


POLL workers load ballot boxes for distribution to other municipalities in Jolo where the military is hunting terror groups with links to Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah. AFP


SECURITY IS TIGHT at the **NAMFREL** Quick Count headquarters in La Salle Greenhills. EDWIN BACASMAS

THE LONG HOT LINE at the precinct in Camarin D Elementary School in Caloocan. AUGUST DELA CRUZ


6 A.M., MAY 14: Man with his daughter rushes his wife-teacher with a ballot box to to start her election duties at a precinct in Sta.Maria, Ilocos Sur. EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

What's in a name?

From page A1

It was Joselito Cayetano, a senatorial candidate of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, who was disqualified by the Commission on Elections on May 11 for being a "nuisance." But the decision was not yet final.

Closer to the Comelec's central office in Manila, BEIs in the city's sixth district also shunned the votes for Alan Cayetano, a senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition, because of guidance from certain Comelec officials in the area.

It was not the case in the opposition bailiwick of San Juan, Metro Manila, where a son of deposed President Joseph Estrada is the mayor.

Election officers in San Juan crossed out the name of Joselito Cayetano from the official list of candidates.

At Xavier School in West Greenhills, election workers blacked out Cayetano's name in the official list of candidates, a reminder to voters that they could not vote for him.

Could have 8-M votes

But across the country, votes for Cayetano were considered stray instead of being kept in a separate tally sheet to be credited to Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano should his case against Joselito be ruled with finality, according to reports reaching the congressman.

The GO senatorial candidate said he could lose eight million votes as a result of Joselito's candidacy.

"By faith, I believe I can still have enough Alan Cayetano votes to make it," Cayetano said.

In the last days of the campaign, Cayetano had to come up with another campaign jingle asking people to vote for Alan Cayetano instead of just Cayetano.

The previous jingle and TV ad, released at the start of the campaign, only promoted the name Cayetano.

When the voting ended yesterday afternoon and tallying of votes began in precincts in Metro Manila, calls flooded the phone lines of the Comelec National Capital Region asking what to do with them.

"Teachers were asking how would they count the Cayetano votes," Comelec-NCR Director Michael Dioneda told the INQUIRER.

Dioneda said his reply to questions was what the Comelec and its law department had said: "Cayetano, Peter and Peter Cayetano votes will be considered stray votes."

In the first hour of the canvassing at the precinct level, the Comelec NCR had already received more than 20 calls asking about Cayetano votes, employees said.

"It looks like many voters still wrote only Cayetano," Dioneda said.

Accusation of sabotage

After receiving reports that even votes for Alan Cayetano were not being credited, the GO senatorial candidate accused Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos of sabotaging his election bid.

"This Comelec is trying to make me lose instead of trying to make the elections fair," Cayetano told the INQUIRER.

Over cable channel ANC, Cayetano said: "It's clear that Chairman Abalos has ordered that I should not win."

"We don't have problems with the BEIs. They were willing to count our votes. But they were being told not to. Because supposedly I was the one disqualified; not Joselito," the opposition candidate said.

The GO senatorial candidate said that for the first 89 days of the campaign, the Comelec adopted the policy of having a separate tally sheet for the unspecified Cayetano votes.

The measure was for the votes to be credited to the congressman if his disqualification case against Joselito was ruled with finality.

All of a sudden

"Why is it all of a sudden on the 90th day, on a weekend, they changed the rules and said that Cayetano votes should be considered stray," Cayatano said.

Cayetano said that his lawyers filed over the weekend an urgent motion for the unspecified Cayetano votes to still be counted.

"But (the commissioners) didn't act on it," the congressman said.

DepEd memo

At the Andres Bonifacio Integrated School (Abis) in Mandaluyong City, principal Juanita Valle said she received the Comelec order and the memorandum from the Department of Education, which was signed by Undersecretary Franklin Sunga, at about 7:30 a.m. yesterday.

The DepEd order mandates that "if only the word Cayetano is written on the ballot, the vote shall be considered stray."

The order means that Joselito is technically still a candidate but votes under his surname will not be counted for him, according to Valle.

About an hour before the precincts' closing, Valle made the rounds at Abis reminding election workers not to count the "Cayetano" vote for Joselito.

But if the voter wrote the Cayetano name along with other Genuine Opposition candidates, Valle directed the BEIs to count it in favor of the Taguig representative.

In such cases, "common sense" dictates that the voter intended to vote for Alan Peter, Valle explained. "We have to consider the voters' voice," she said.

Against Election Code

Cayetano said the Comelec order to the BEIs to consider the unspecified Cayetano votes stray was against Section 211 of the Election Code.

He said that according to the provision of the Election Code, the BEIs should be the ones tasked with evaluating whether a particular vote should be counted or not.

Cayetano said the BEIs could not just consider unspecified Cayetano votes as stray especially if it was made on a ballot that contained the names of GO's 10 other candidates.

"In such a case, you'd see that that there was an intention of the voter to vote straight for (the GO candidates). Why would you consider that Cayetano vote stray?" the congressman said.

Cayetano said that with the Comelec decision on Joselito's disqualification, it should have been Joselito's burden to file a temporary restraining order with the Supreme Court so his name could remain on the official list of candidates.

"Why did the Comelec use the media to declare Joselito disqualified and the following day secretly released an order telling BEIs to consider unspecified Cayetano votes as stray?" Cayetano said.

Administration's pet peeve

Cayetano is a pet peeve of the Arroyo administration following his allegations that President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, had a substantial bank account in a German bank.

The President's husband tried to have Cayetano expelled from the House of Representatives through a complaint in the House ethics committee.

Joselito has been widely viewed as a nuisance candidate made to run to make the campaign and election miserable for the congressman.

In San Juan, Liza Torres, a Comelec officer, said she gave the verbal order to BEIs on Sunday to cross out the name of Joselito Cayetano from the official list of candidates in accordance with the Comelec's resolution dismissing his appeal.

However, some BEIs were not immediately notified so there were some precincts where Joselito Cayetano's name was still on the list, she said.

Cynthia Tejada, a BEI at Xavier School, said election officers started crossing out Cayetano's name when they set up the precincts yesterday. As a result, all ballots with the name "Cayetano" will be counted for the Alan Cayetano, she noted.

San Juan mayor happy

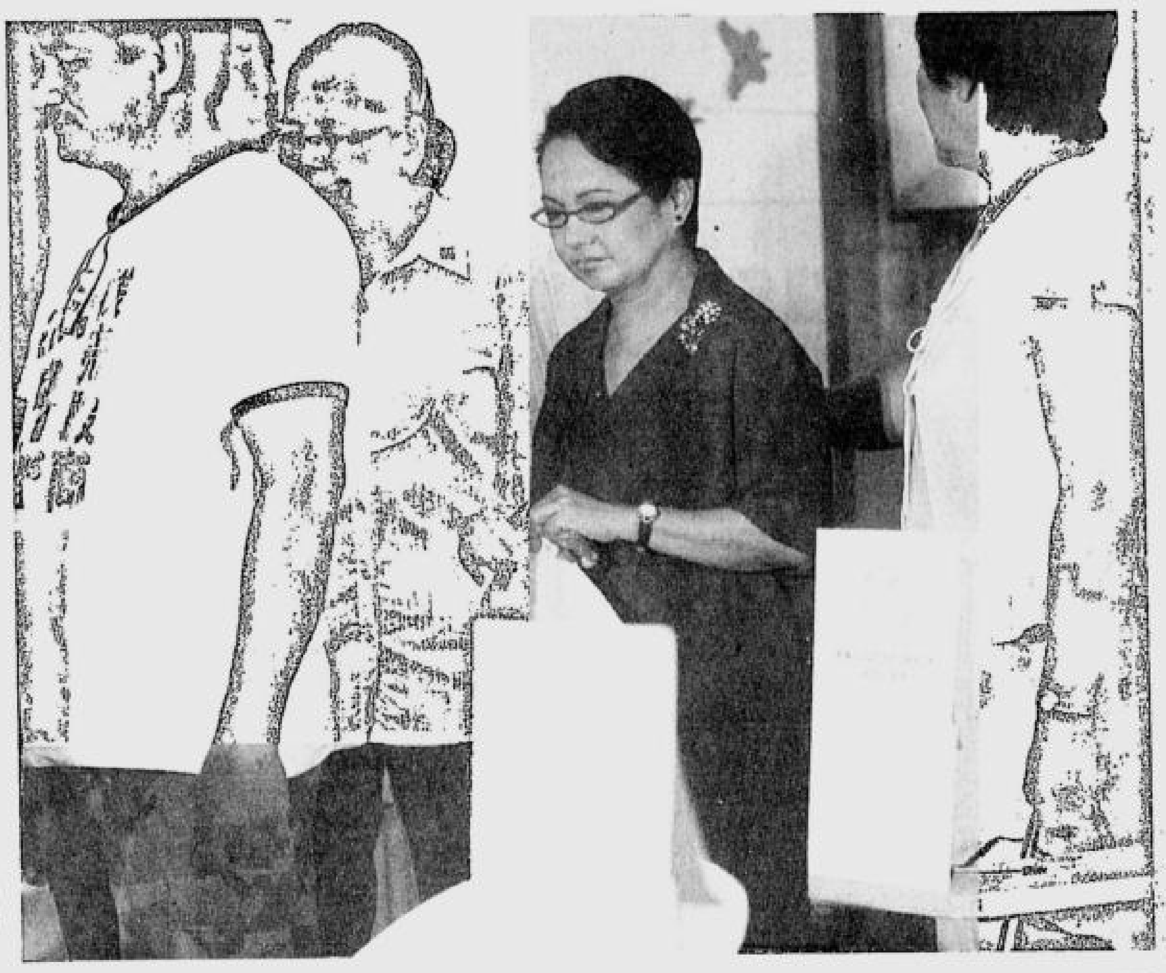
San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito hailed the removal of Cayetano's name from the official candidate list.

"I'm very happy. At least the Cayetano votes will be credited to him [Alan Peter]," Ejercito said.

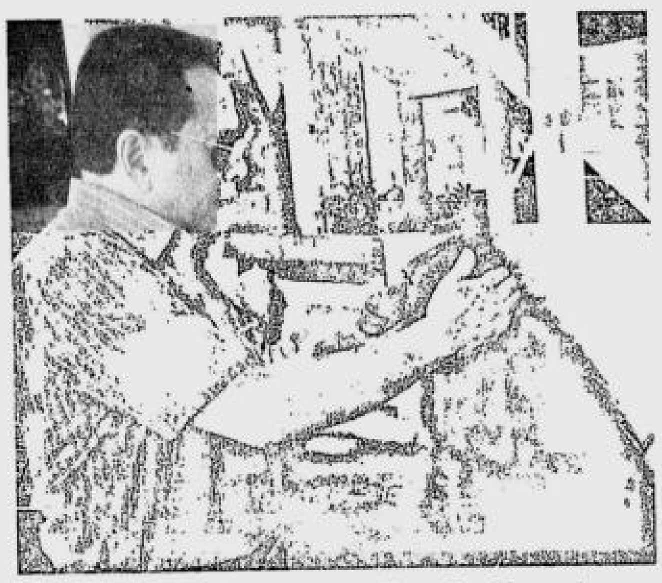
The Comelec's decision sowed confusion among election workers. In other parts of Metro Manila, however, the nuisance candidate's name was not blacked out.

ELEKSYON 2007

Day of reckoning for movers, shakers



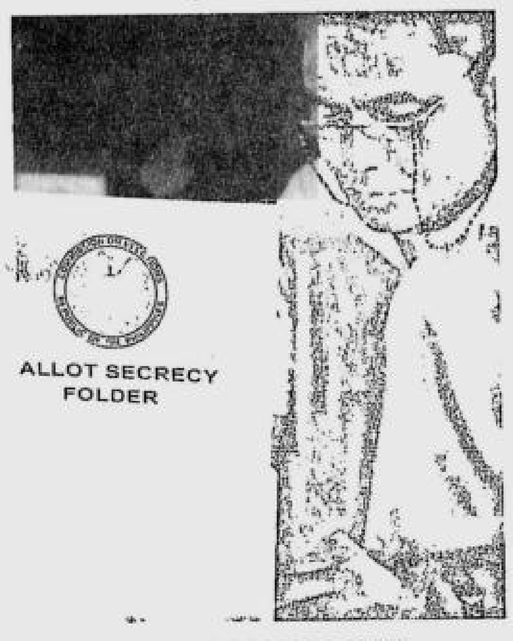
JUST ONE OF THE GUYS: President Arroyo awaits her turn with other voters to cast her ballot in Precinct 1A-1B cluster at Lubao East Central, Gabaldon building, Lubao Elementary School. LYN RILLON



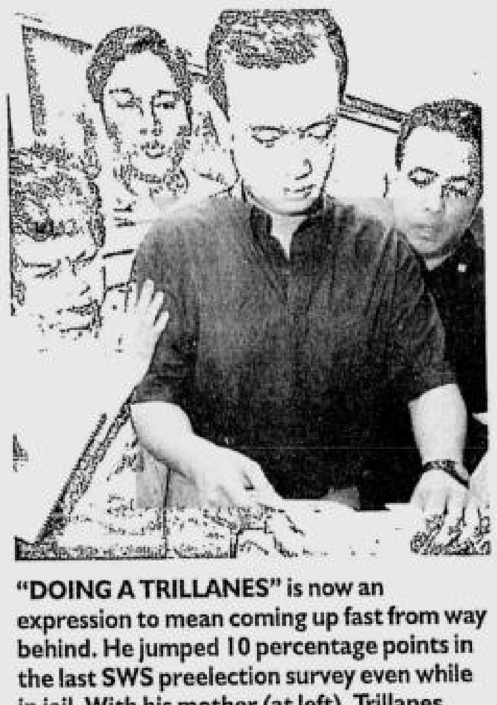
PLAYTIME: After casting his vote, Ilocos Sur Gov. and senatorial candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson feeds his pets at his sprawling Baluarte residence in Vigan City. LEONCIO BALBIN JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

WAY TO GO: The architect and principal of the Genuine Opposition ticket votes inside his detention quarters in his Tanay estate in Rizal. The Sandiganbayan did not allow him to vote in Greenhills, San Juan, where he's registered. JOAN BONDOC

THE GOKONGWEIS, the patriarch John and daughter Robina, vote at the Forbes Park gym in Makati City. RUDY ESPERAS



INTIMATIONS OF PEOPLE POWER: Pampanga's gubernatorial bet Father Eddie Panlilio has inspired the stirrings of people power in a province that's caught between two dominant but allegedly undesirable candidates. TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON



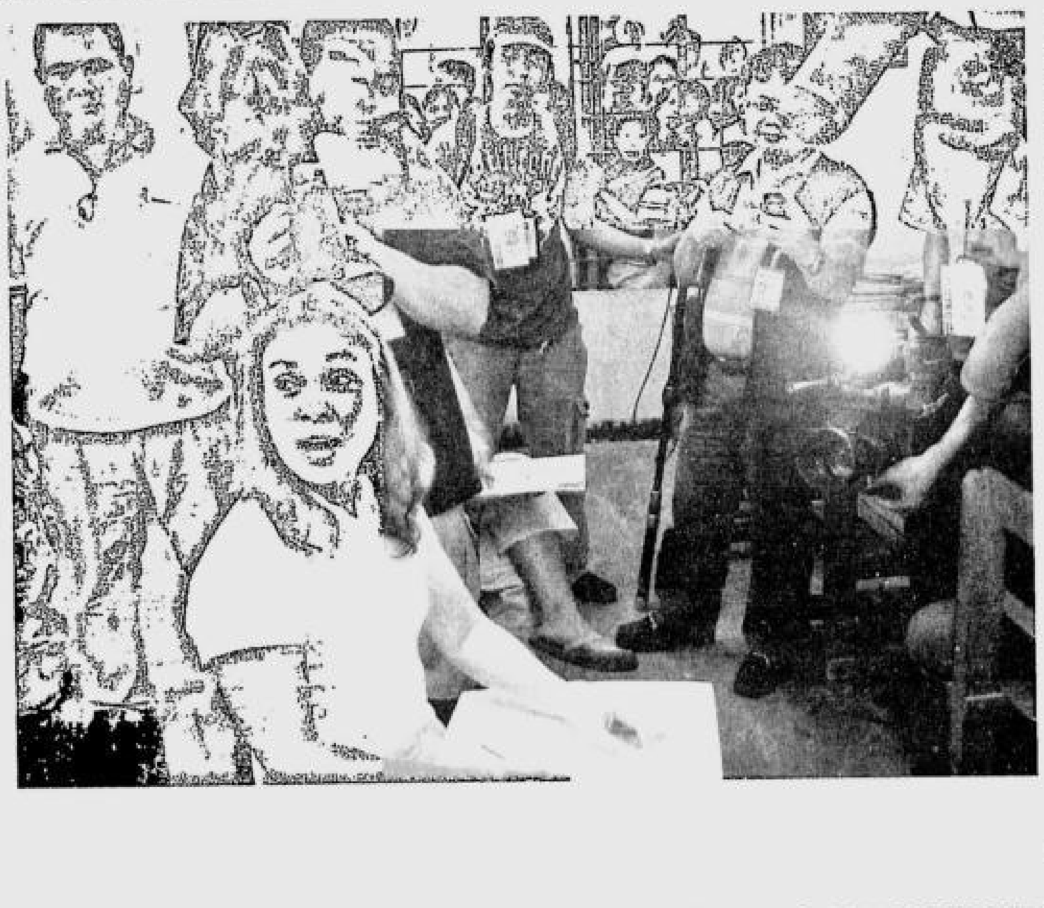
"DOING A TRILLANES" is now an expression to mean coming up fast from way behind. He jumped 10 percentage points in the last SWS preelection survey even while in jail. With his mother (at left), Trillanes votes at the Holy Infant Montessori School in BF Homes, Caloocan City. RAFFY LERMA

LINANGIN
NAS NA YAMAN

THE INDEPENDENTS: Sen. Kiko Pangilinan and his wife who needs no introduction do their thing at Pinyahan, Quezon City. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BALLOT SECRECY FOLDER
BALLOT SECRECY FOLDER

FOR PASIG MAYOR: Dodot Jaworski and wife Mikee cast their ballots at Valle Verde III's covered court in Barangay Ugong, Pasig City. ROGER CARPIO



HOMETOWN BOY MAKES GOOD: Francis "Chiz" Escudero returns to his roots in Sorsogon to vote. One of the youngest senatorial candidates, Escudero has been consistently in the top five in preelection surveys. AP

HOUNDED BY THE MEDIA, preelection survey topnotcher, Loren Legarda prepares to fill up her ballot in Malabon. AP

Overseas voting turnout very low, Comelec admits

By Jerome Aning and Philip Tubeza

THE TURNOUT OF OVERSEAS absentee voters (OAV) in yesterday's midterm elections was very low, the Commission on Elections said yesterday.

Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr., chair of the Comelec committee on Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV), said only 71,668 votes—less than 20 percent of the expected overseas votes—were cast as of 3 p.m., Manila time yesterday, when OAV precincts around the world closed.

Personally filled-up or mailed ballots were accepted.

The turnout was "very low" considering that there are about 504,000 overseas absentee voters, Tuason said.

Tuason's committee earlier estimated that 20 percent of those registered would not be able to vote because they had already returned to the Philippines or transferred to another area or country.

The commissioner said the dismal turnout was due to various factors. He cited voters' apathy and the distance between voters' worksites and voting precints.

Tuason insisted the Comelec was not remiss in conducting widespread information drives about the OAV, particularly on the procedures in casting ballots by mail or in person. "I'm sure they (overseas Filipinos) are aware of it."

Tuason said he may recommend the scrapping of a controversial OAV provision requiring an overseas voter to sign an affidavit signifying his intent to return to the Philippines after two years.

Tuason also conceded in a meeting with the Filipino community in Hong Kong on May 4 that the "Hello Garci" scandal and other allegations of fraud during the 2004 elections had damaged the Comelec's credibility here and abroad.

At any rate, Tuason said the Comelec will evaluate every aspect of the OAV to encourage more voters to participate in future elections.

"I won't recommend its scrapping, but definitely, lots of improvements are needed," he told reporters.

Overseas absentee voting, provided for in the 1987 Constitution and enforced by Republic Act No. 9189, is meant to give overseas Filipino workers a voice, in recognition of their big contribution to the economy.

In the 2004 elections, there were 364,187 Flipino overseas voters registered, of whom about 65 percent turned out to vote.

Despite registration drives and new rules allowing voting by mail, the Comelec was only able to get about 100,000 new overseas voters for this year.

There was a plan to test voting through the Internet in Singapore but it was scrapped over questions of legality.

Comelec official keeps working despite ma's death

ELECTIONS COMMISSIONER FLORENTINO Tuason Jr. reported for work yesterday despite the sudden death of his mother.

Tuason's mother, Liwliwa, 89, died after suffering cardiac arrest at 8:30 a.m. yesterday. Her remains lie at the Funeraria Paz chapel at Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City.

"She has been in and out of the hospital, but she was still very strong when I last saw her," Tuason told reporters.

Tuason, who usually attended to his mother, said he would be at the Commission on Elections today to fulfill his duties.

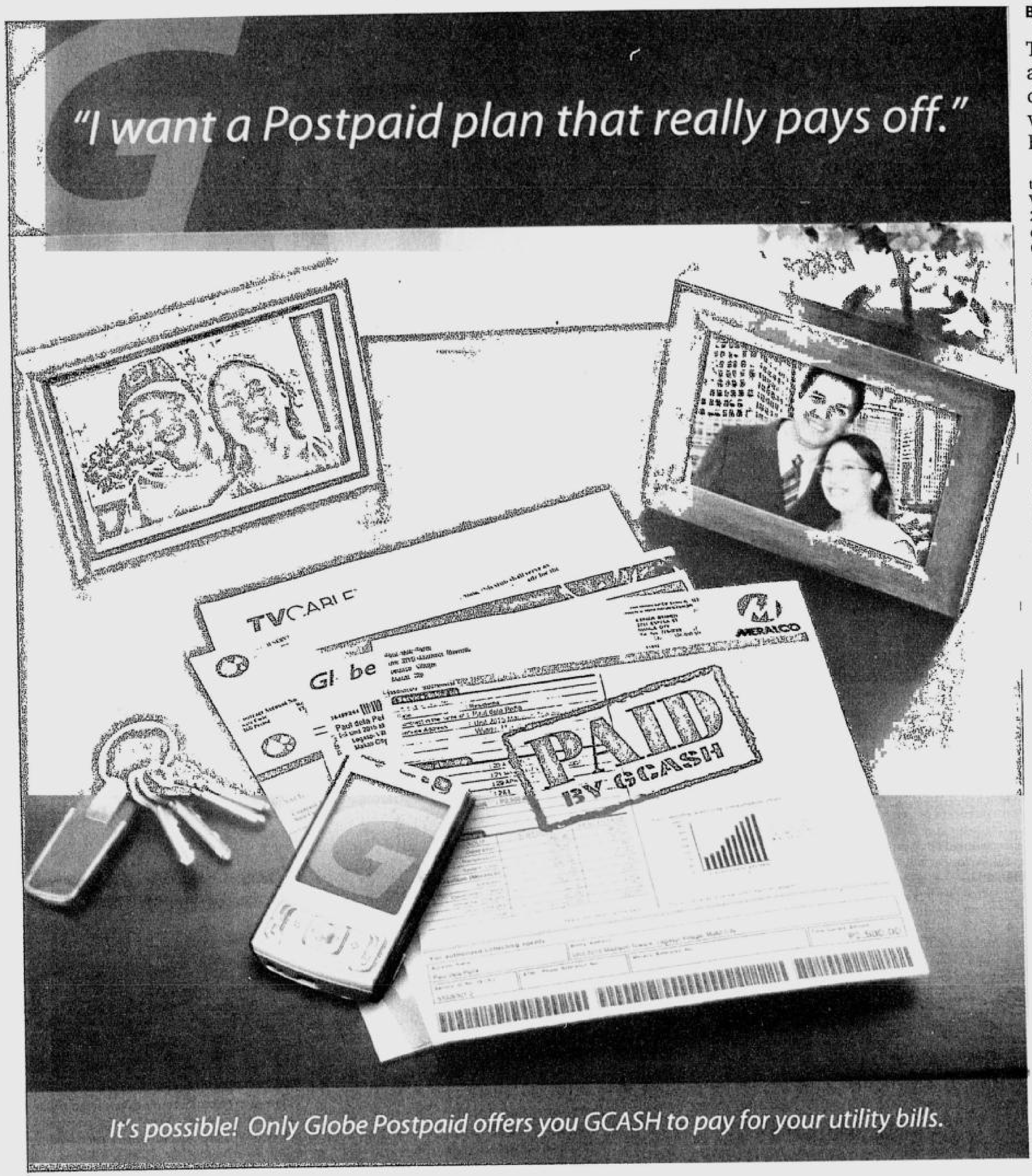
If he needs to attend to funeral preparations, tentatively set for this weekend, he would still keep in touch with his office by phone, he said.

Tuason is the commissioner in charge of the overseas and local absentee voting and the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions.

He was busy the whole day yesterday receiving reports from his areas of responsibility. He reported a 75 to 85-percent voter turnout in Southern Tagalog and Bicol, with no incidents of failure or postponement of elections.

In Biñan, Laguna, where Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.'s son-in-law, Francisco Yatco, was running for mayor, Tuason said the voting in 17 precincts was delayed after the Board of Election Inspectors failed to report to the precincts due to a misunderstanding of the new Comelec rules.

The BEIs reported for work after it was explained to them that they automatically became registered voters in the precincts where they were assigned. *Jerome Aning*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Binay 'arrests' 7 poll watchers

Lapid spends quiet day mulling contingency plan

SEN. LITO Lapid (above) is all smiles as he casts his vote. His rival for the mayoral post, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay (right), questions the presence of poll watchers wearing Kampi shirts inside precincts.
RUDY ESPERAS, ERIK ARAZAS

By DJ Yap

MAKATI MAYOR JEJOMAR BINAY, who is running for reelection, had just arrived at the San Antonio High School yesterday to vote when he saw poll watchers wearing blue T-shirts with the word "Kampi" printed on the back.

Binay told them their presence in the precincts was illegal and placed seven of them under citizen's arrest. His move promptly drew a protest from the group's lawyers.

The mayor is pitted against administration candidate, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid. Kampi is the party of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The incident occurred shortly after Binay arrived at the school, a stone's throw from his house on Caong Street, at 8:30 a.m. yesterday.

After entertaining questions from reporters, the mayor, flanked by a handful of bodyguards and aides, was about to go to his precinct to cast his vote when he saw Shaumi Juanillo, a Lakas Kampi poll watcher. Binay went up to the woman, placed his left arm around her shoulders and told her that her presence was unauthorized.

He caught sight of Rudy Abenido, another watcher, and also took him aside. At Precinct 550C BET 652, he chanced upon five others wearing similar shirts and arrested them as well. From their identification cards, the five were identified as Gino Mendoza, Jean Paul Sologastua, Myraquel Domingo, Janet Sotto and Alicia Santiago.

PO3 Elmerando Villanueva said the seven would be taken to the Police Community Precinct 5, near the South Super Highway, as a "standard operating procedure," but he did not say on what charges.

BINAY/ A27

Will favorite colors bring them luck?

By Julie M. Aurelio

AS CANDIDATES IN SOUTHERN METRO Manila cast their votes yesterday, they were dressed in what they considered their lucky colors—bright hues which they believe would lead to victory.

In Pasay, Rep. Consuelo Dy arrived at the Juan Sumulong Elementary School at around 11 a.m., decked in purple, the standard color of her campaign. Dy is running for city mayor under the Kampi ticket. She is pitted against former Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad.

"This is the right time for the city to adopt changes," she said. "We are a unified group eyeing a common direction."

Another candidate, Mayor Allan Panaligan who is running for congressman, was in a yellow Lacoste polo shirt.

"This is my lucky color for the day," he explained after spending 10 minutes filling up his ballot at the Marcela Marcelo Elementary School. Panaligan was the 143rd voter in Precinct 0594A, leading him to quip: "143, I love you!"

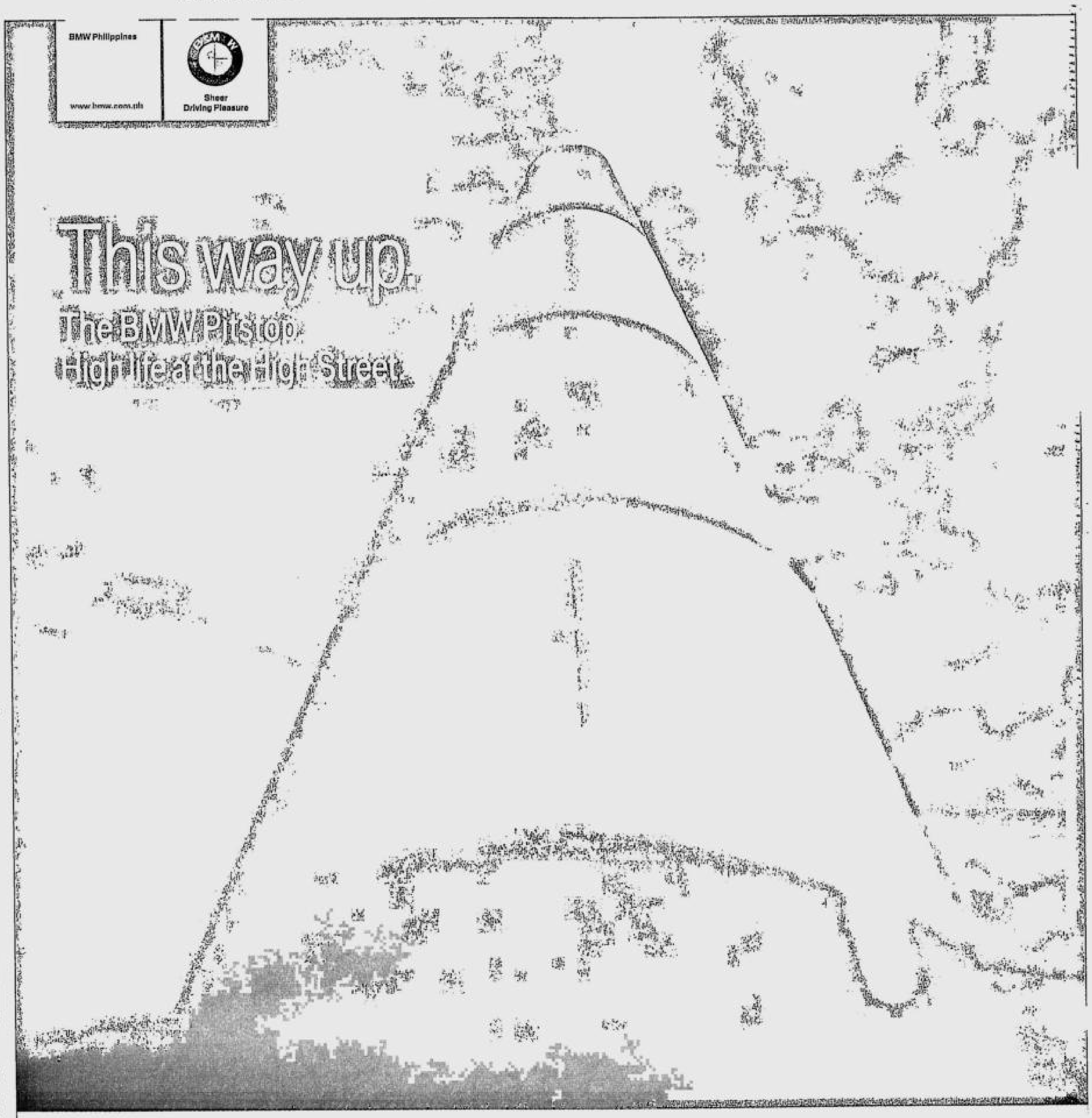
Trinidad, on the other hand, was accompanied by a few supporters when he cast his vote at the Jose Rizal Elementary School, garbed in his lucky color: An orange Lacoste polo.

"I voted straight for the opposition," he told the INQUIRER afterward.

On the other hand, Las Piñas mayoral candidate Vergel Aguilar came early to the Doña Manuela Elementary School in Pamplona 3, accompanied by two bodyguards. Aguilar, the city's former mayor, wants to reclaim his old post.

Broadcaster Ricardo "Dong" Puno, who is running for congressman in Muntinlupa City, cast his vote at the De La Salle Zobel in Ayala Alabang Village, a few hours after his rival, incumbent Rep. Ruffy Biazon, trooped to the poll precinct at 7 a.m.

PASIG Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski at the precinct with wife Mikee Cojuangco. Jaworski is running for Pasig mayor. ROGER CARPIO



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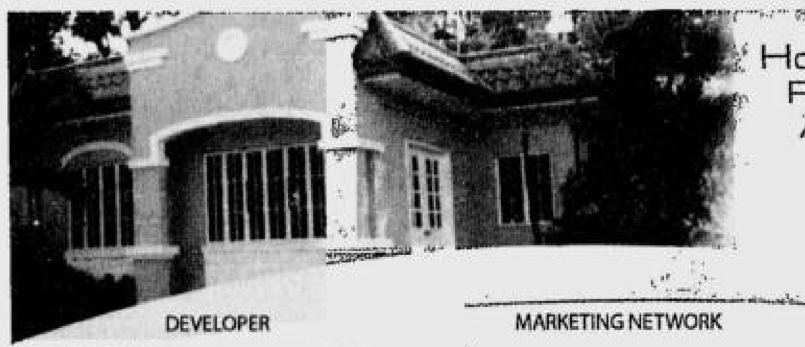

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Still same story of missing names, precinct search

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A SLEW OF PROBLEMS GREETED voters and election officers in Quezon City yesterday, as disenfranchised constituents wandered around the polling precincts—some disappointed, others angry.

At the Balingasa Elementary School in the city's first district, people were lined up in front of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) desk because they could not find their names on the voters' list.

Rodrigo Onate, a Quezon City resident, complained that his family was able to vote in the same precinct but his name was not on the list.

The PPCRV volunteers, on the other hand, could not direct them to their designated polling precincts because they did not have copies of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) master list.

"The voters told us to go home because we could not do anything," PPCRV member Rene Bueza said.

Rosario Rosello, an election support personnel assigned at the Bagong Pag-asa Elementary School, said many people complained that their names were not in the voters' list. "Some of the voters said their dead relatives were still in the list while their names were not," Rosello said.

Even city treasurer Victor Endriga encountered the same problem, and was initially turned away at the Kamuning Elementary School.

"A month ago, the Comelec sent me an official sample ballot and voters' information sheet, which indicated that I was a registered voter in Pasig. This baffled me because I am already a Quezon City resident," said Endriga, adding that such a mistake could allow unscrupulous people to cast their votes in different places. He was able to vote four hours later after getting a letter from the city's election officer allowing him to vote.

"This is ironic because all election supplies come from our office after the Comelec deputized us to do so," Endriga said, adding that he was able to vote in the same precinct during the 2004 elections.

Poll watcher Evelyn Guerrero said many voters at the Bagong Pag-asa Elementary School gave up looking for their precincts and just decided to go home.

In Barangay Kalusugan, residents trooped to a tent in the middle of the road to vote. "The barangay could not find a government office we could use as precincts," said Cielo Farinas, of Board of Election Inspectors. *With Verity Ayrah B. Cabigao and Faith Alayon*

No violence, just violations in Manila

By Allison W. Lopez

NO ELECTION-RELATED INCIDENTS were reported in Manila on election day, just violations.

A report from the Manila Police District's Tactical Operation Center noted that as of 2 p.m. yesterday, no incidents which could mar the holding of elections had been reported.

Various violations of election rules, however, were observed in Ramon Magsaysay High School in Sampaloc. At 6:20 a.m., poll watchers complained to reporters that the principal did not allow them to enter the precincts until 7 a.m. which is against the Commission on Election's order that they should be allowed to observe poll preparations.

The school principal, Dr. Cristina Reyes vehemently denied the allegation. "*Wala, walang* (There was no) confusion. We allowed them inside at 6:30 a.m.," she said.

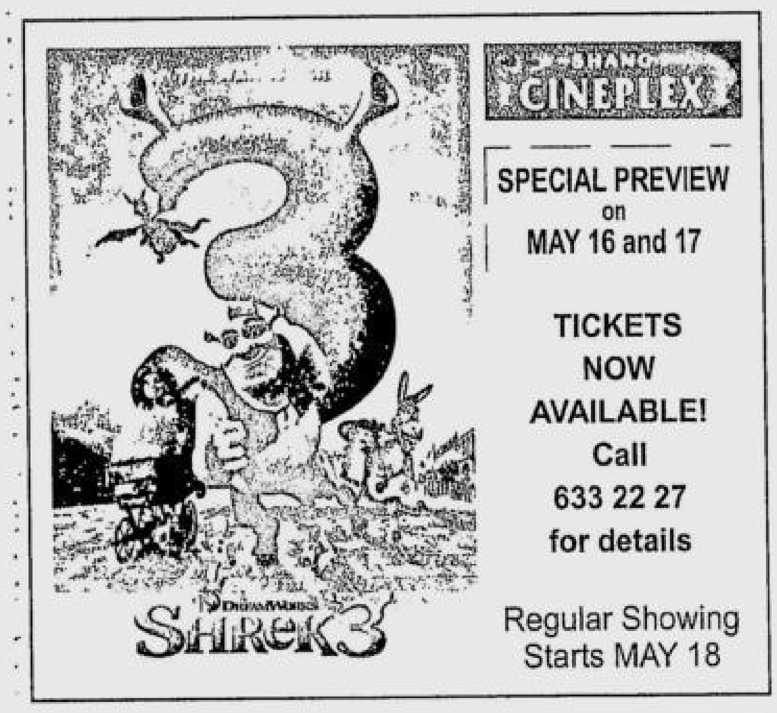
At Elpidio Quirino High School in Bacood, Sta. Mesa, some voters arrived in jeepneys bearing the sign "Libreng Sakay (Free Ride)." It was later discovered that the jeeps were hired by a congressional candidate to pick up voters in the sixth district and take them to polling precincts.

The jeep operators, a driver said, were paid P1,000 each to bring voters to polling areas and at the same time ferry home those that had already cast their votes.

Sample ballots, meanwhile, littered the premises of Rosauro Almario School in Delpan, Tondo, where mayoral candidate Sen. Alfredo Lim arrived at 7:45 a.m. to vote. *With Delfin Jr. Fabrigas, Cyrian S. Agujo and Aaron John del Rosario*

BALLOT SECRECY FOLDER

A JOVIAL Ali Atienza (right) poses for photographers while listing his voting preferences while his rival for Manila's mayoral post, Sen. Alfredo Lim is all too serious. REM ZAMORA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FLOR Balag-ey (left photo), who is blind, dictates her senatorial picks to her daughter who writes them down. Balag-ey was one of several differently-abled persons who participated in yesterday's elections, including a woman in a wheelchair (right) who cast her vote at the Forbes Park Gym in Makati City. RUDY ESPERAS, JOAN BONDOC

Gray power shows up at the polls, persons with disabilities turned off

By DJ Yap and Kristine L. Alave

GRAY-HAIRED GRANDPAS AND grandmas were a force to reckon with among the voters who trooped to the San Antonio High School in Makati City yesterday, leading local observers to wonder about the possible existence of a "senior citizen vote."

In this polling center at least, one out of every five voters could be considered elderly. Some of them were clutching canes, others were aided by family members, while a few were walking by themselves, slowly but surely. They all said they want to make their votes count.

At 82, Vicenta Ignoro said she had never missed an election. "As long as my eyes are still okay, I will vote," she said. Asked who she intended to vote for, she hinted that she preferred reelectionist Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay over his opponent, administration Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid.

The incumbent mayor, whose programs for senior citizens are famous nationwide, seems to know this segment of the population quite well.

Ninety-year-old Francisco Teves said: "Binay never forgets his constituents. He even gives us a cake on our birthdays. I have no complaints."

Zenaida Tabhan agreed: "He'll win hands down." Like Teves, age did not stop the 67-year-old retiree from voting. She added that she also helped out seniors who needed assistance.

"I saw my name on the list right away and located my precinct just as easily," Teves said. But it took Ignoro more than an hour to find her precinct, after searching for her name in the list of registered voters in vain.

It was even more difficult for the differently abled. In Pasig City, Rowena Cruz endured the discomfort, the oppressive heat, and the big crowds at the Rizal National High School, just so she could vote for mayoral bet Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski.

But when she arrived at the polling place with a friend, Cruz, who walks with the aid of a cane, almost gave up. Her precinct was on the third floor. "My friend asked if I could vote in a precinct on the ground floor. If they say no, I guess I have to climb up. After all, I have a right to vote, " she said.

The lack of facilities for persons with disability such as ramps and elevators has discouraged some to get out and vote. An election supervisor in the area, Ellen Jagmis, admitted that election laws do not have a clause providing a convenient place for these voters. The Commission on Elections, however, mandates that illiterate and voters with disabilities may be assisted by a member of their household or by a member of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI).

Wheelchair-bound Ramon Zamosa, 61, came with his nephew as early as 9 a.m. only to be told that his precinct was on the third floor. "I don't want to vote anymore. They should have a room for people like us," Zamosa grumbled.

Paul Bryan Magallanes, another wheelchair-bound voter, said friends carried him to the third floor after the BEI rejected his request to have his ballot delivered to him on the first floor. In the 2004 presidential elections, Magallanes said he had no problems as his precinct was on the first floor. *With Kimberly Tan*

Junk voters on list, court orders

By Julie M. Aurelio

CONFUSION REIGNED IN SEVERAL precincts in two schools in Pasay City yesterday as more than 1,500 voters in three barangays were dropped from the list of voters based on several court orders.

Election officials posted at the different voting precincts of the Pasay City West High School and Cuneta Elementary School said they received on Sunday copies of the court orders which dropped the names of 1,126 and 564 people, respectively, from the city's list of qualified voters.

Petitions

The orders were issued by Judge Gina M. Bibat-Palamos of the Pasay City Metropolitan Trial Court Branches 46 and 47 based on petitions filed by Joevi Aguila and Armando Villegas.

Aguila, who filed the petition for exclusion covering precincts at the Cuneta Elementary School, said he conducted a house-to-house survey of residents in Barangays 201 and 165.

According to him, he found out that 564 names in the barangay's list of registered voters were either dead or no longer residing in the area.

Addresses

Some of the addresses given by voters on the list, on the other hand, were those of establishments like the San Juan de Dios Hospital and several hotels, he added.

Villegas, the petitioner in the exclusion case against 1,126 registered voters in Barangay 13, said he also conducted a survey from December 2006 to January this year.

Like Aguila, he discovered that the 1,126 supposed voters were not residents in the area.

Low turnout

"There was a low turnout in our precinct because I think the excluded voters knew beforehand about the court order," Myrna Sarmiento, Pasay City West High School principal, said.

"Only about 20 persons came to my office and questioned their exclusion."

She added that she was later informed that 111 voters who had been excluded were again allowed to vote yesterday by the Commission on Elections after they presented proof of residency in the area.

Cuneta Elementary School principal Evaresto Sobremisana, on the other hand, said he only got the list of excluded voters at around 8 a.m. yesterday.

He added that it did not come with a court order so he still had to request for a copy of the judge's decision.

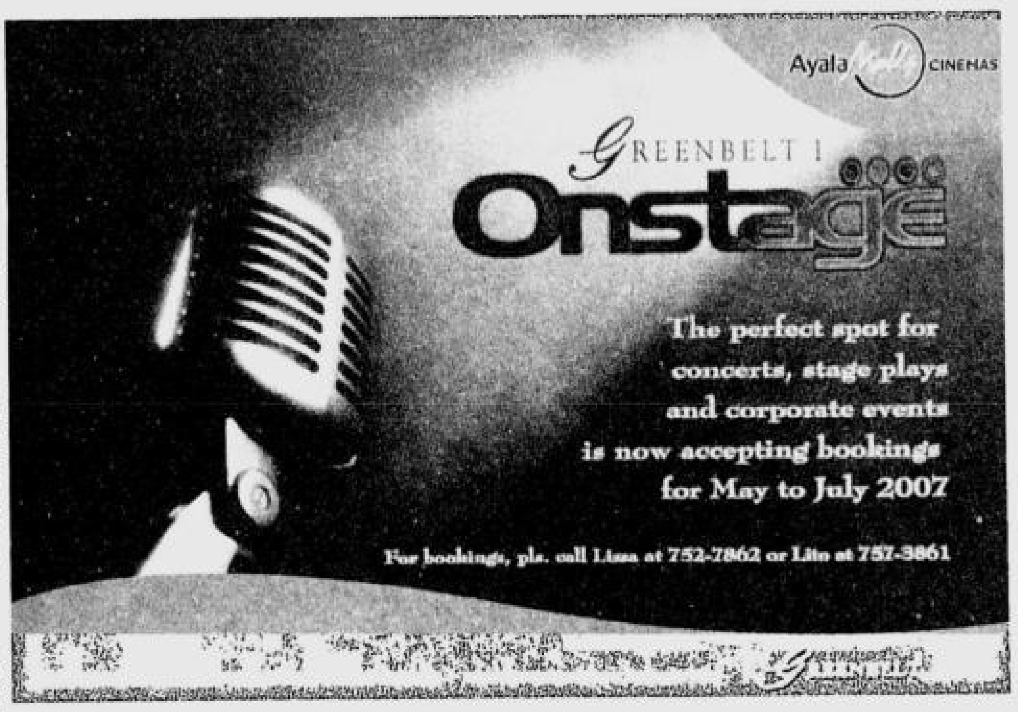
Complaints

"Of course, there were those who complained about their exclusion because not all of them were given notices about it," Sobremisana said.

He added, however, that those who were affected by the court order did not create a scene.

"We only had a minor incident when (actress/singer) Sharon Cuneta came here to vote," Sobremisana said.

"I had to request police escorts for her because the fans were all over her. She could not even get out of the car, " he added. *With Hershey D. Homol*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ELEKSYON 2007

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as of 7:30 p.m.

National Capital Region

CALOOCAN CITY

Mayor	
ASISTIO, Luis (NPC)	1965
ECHIVERRI, Enrico (Lakas)	1434

LAS PINAS CITY

Congressman (lone)	
VILLAR, Cynthia (NP)	151
Mayor	
ABELLAR, Antonio Jr. (Kampi)	1
AGUILAR, Vergel (Ind)	158
ROQUE, Benjamin (Ind)	1
Vice-Mayor	
DELA CRUZ, Berlin (NPC)	78
GONZALES, Benjamin (PMP)	2
MARTINEZ, Ferdinand (Kampi)	2
MEDINA, Henry (Lakas)	68

MAKATI CITY

Congressman (1st district)	
IBAY, Oscar (Kampi)	200
LOCSIN, Tedoro Jr. (PDP-Laban)	747
Congressman (2nd district)	
BINAY, Mar-len Abigail (UNO/PDP-Laban)	371
GENUINO, Erwin (Lakas)	208
Mayor	
BINAY, Jejomar (PDP-Laban/UNO)	1381
DULALIA, Elias (Ind)	14
LAPID, Manuel (Lakas)	170
Vice-Mayor	
MERCADO, Ernesto (PDP-Laban)	1115
YABUT, Nemesio Jr. (Lakas)	409

MALABON-NAVOTAS

Congressman (lone)	
FRANCISCO, Maritoni (PMP)	398
LACSON-NOEL, Josephine Veronique (NPC)	79
SANDOVAL, Alvin (LP)	351

MALABON

Vice-Mayor	
VICENCIO, Arnold (PMP/NPC/UNO)	230

NAVOTAS

Mayor	
TIANGCO, Tobias (Partido Navoteño)	140
SANDOVAL, Ricky (Coalition of Administrative Political Party)	50

MANDALUYONG CITY

Congressman (lone)	
CUSTODIO, Emelito (Ind)	7
GONZALES, Neptali II (Lakas)	118
Mayor	
ABALOS, Benhur (Lakas)	123
ALPUERTO, Camilo (LP-Jack V. Ramel)	3
SOLOMON, Florencio (Ind)	2
Vice-Mayor	
DE GUZMAN, Danilo (PMP)	60
RAMEL, Jack (LP-Jack V. Ramel)	1
STA. MARIA, Renato (Lakas)	66

MANILA

Congressman (4th district)	
BAGATSING, Ramon Jr. (LP)	345
Congressman (5th district)	
CUNA, Juan Miguel (LP)	259
HIZON, Estrelita (UNO/NP)	235
IBAY, Richard (Aksyon Demokratiko)	56
VILLEGAS, Juliet (LP)	1
Mayor	
ATIENZA, Arnold (LP)	274
LACUNA, Danilo (PDP-Laban)	196
LIM, Alfredo (UNO/KKK Laban)	474
BACANI, Rodolfo (LP)	23
Vice-Mayor	
BAGATSING, Don Ramon (LP)	148
HIZON, Joey (NP)	537
BELGICA, Grepor (Ind)	14
ORTEGA, Robert Jr. (Aksyon Demokratiko)	35
ASTALS, Cita (Ind)	5
DOMAGOSO, Francisco (Isko Moreno) (PDP-Laban)	213

MARIKINA CITY

Congressman (2nd district)	
CANDAZO, Romeo (PMP)	53
DE GUZMAN, Del (Lakas)	121
Mayor	
FERNANDO, Ma. Lourdes (Lakas)	137
MOLINA, Benjamin Jr. (PMP)	30
Vice-Mayor	
ANDRES, Marion (Lakas)	126
ANGELES, Efren (PMP)	30

MUNTINLUPA CITY

Congressman	
BIAZON, Rozzano Rufino (LP)	567
PUNO, Ricardo Jr. (NPC)	439

PASIG CITY

Congressman	
BATACAN, Ermeraldo (Reporma/Lapiang Manggagawa)	5
CARINO, Noel (NPC)	38
MELENDRES, Fernando (Ind)	15
ROMULO, Roman (Kampi)	29
SALATANDRE, Orlando Jr. (Ind)	5
TATCO, Jose Jr. (LP)	13
Mayor	
EUSEBIO, Roberto (NPC)	50
JAWORSKI, Robert Jr. (Lakas)	52
RIVERA, Wainwright (PMP)	2
Vice-Mayor	
LANOT, Henry II (LP)	24
MARTIRES, Rosali (Kampi)	40
RAMOS, Briccio (Lakas)	36

QUEZON CITY

Congressman (1st district)	
ABESAMIS, Rommel (NPC)	29
CRISOLOGO, Vincent (Lakas)	71
Congressman (2nd district)	
LIBAN, Dante (LP)	20
MATHAY, Ismael III (Kampi)	51
SUSANO, Mary Ann (Lakas)	3129
Congressman (4th district)	
DAZA, Nanette (Lakas)	163
PALACIOS, Albert Hans (UNO/Ind)	28
Mayor	
ACEBEDO, Romeo (Ind)	2
ALVAREZ, Florian (Ind)	2
ROSALES, Andy (Ind)	1
BELMONTE, Feliciano Jr. (Lakas)	3500
Vice-Mayor	
BAUTISTA, Herbert (Lakas)	3481
BAUTISTA, Roberto (Ind)	8
JOTA, Rolando (KBL)	2
UBSUM, Rogelio (Ind)	5

SAN JUAN

Congressman (lone)	
ALCOVENDAZ, Ericson (Ind)	32
ZAMORA, Ronaldo (PMP)	37
Mayor	
EJERCITO, JV (PMP)	59
SINGSON, Engracia (Ind)	9
Vice-Mayor	
ANGELES, Glenn (Ind)	20
CELLES, Leonardo (PMP)	45

TAGUIG-PATEROS

Congressman (1st district)	
CAPCO, Jose Jr. (Ind)	14
CAYETANO, Ma. Laarni (NP)	45
CERAFICA, Arnel (Kilusang Diwa ng Taguig)	46

TAGUIG

Mayor	
MIRANDA, Marianito (NPC)	28
TINGA, Sigfrido (KDT)	75
Vice-Mayor	
ELIAS, George (KDT)	55
LABAO-ALZONA, Ma. Loida (UNO)	48

All peaceful on northern Metro front

By Nancy C. Carvajal

"RELATIVELY PEACEFUL, DESPITE the usual problems and violations" was how volunteers of the election watch dog, the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) assessed yesterday's elections in the northern part of Metro Manila.

PPCRV volunteers were deployed to various polling centers in the Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela) area.

No election-related violent incidents were reported until the polling centers closed at 3 p.m., according to the Northern Police District Tactical Operation Center.

The most common complaint the PPCRV received yesterday was about the blatant distribution of sample ballots near voting precincts.

"Despite strict rules from the Commission on Elections and reminders from us, supporters of local candidates still gave out sample ballots near the schools where voting was going on," said Sr. Linda Maningas of the PPCRV based in Navotas.

The practice was observed near the Navotas Municipal High School and Navotas Elementary School, she added.

"One major problem encountered was the loss of names of some voters," according to Erlyn Espinosa, Maysilo Elementary School coordinator. "Some people would ask for their precinct number and then they would find out that their names are not on the list posted on the door of their assigned precinct. That's the most common reason why they failed to vote. We had six cases earlier."

Comelec lawyer Jonalyn S. Sabellano, meanwhile, said these voters were probably in the deactivated list, "meaning, they failed to vote in two successive regular elections.

"To be able to vote again, you have to go to Comelec to reactivate your registration. Reactivation is done during the period of registration," she added.

Forgiving is good for one's health

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

EDITA BURGOS, WIFE OF THE late press freedom icon Joe Burgos, says she has forgiven her son Jonas Joseph's abductors and his torturers—if there be any—and those who ordered his abduction.

Her statement is worth quoting: "We are in the dark night of the soul. If we accept what has happened and forgive the wrong done us, the dawn will come early."

Yes, forgiving people for a wrong done to you is very difficult. It takes much courage and sheer force of will to forgive.

But forgiveness is not only divine. It is also healthy.

People who have bottled-up emotions are liable to get sick. It is said that heart attacks, strokes, cancer and other serious ailments are caused by an unforgiving heart.

So, if you want to live longer, forgive and forget.

* * *

All eyes are on Mindanao, shouted the INQUIRER banner story headline yesterday.

Mindanao was the focus of attention of poll watchdogs because of incidents of reported rampant cheating and vote-buying, according to the report.

The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, yes. Lanao del Sur, yes.

But the election in non-Muslim Mindanao was, by and large, clean, free and honest.

Rampant cheating and vote-buying during elections is no longer news in Muslim Mindanao.

Remember, the last province to turn in its election returns in every election is Lanao del Sur.

Why? Because the results in that province determine the tail-end winners in every senatorial race.

I'm not saying all Muslims are cheats. I'm only stating an incontrovertible fact: That Lanao del Sur submits the last election returns. Remember that popular statement that even the birds and the bees vote in Lanao.

* * *

The Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) yesterday came out to clarify a report about the Philippines. It said it did not single out the country as the most corrupt country in Asia.

But why did it take PERC two months to make the "clarification" after the INQUIRER came out with the banner story? The timing of the PERC clarification is suspect, coming as it did on the eve of the election.

* * *

I have it on good authority that engineers who designed and set up the overpriced lampposts for the Asean Summit in Cebu early this year are thinking of coming out in the open to clear their names.

I talked to one of these engineers who told me about the involvement of a brother of a top Cabinet official in the scam.

This engineer told me that he, his colleagues and other workers felt betrayed because they didn't get a centavo from the project, and yet they were dragged into the mess.

"Mon, some of us have been left holding an empty bag and humiliated when the culprits, including the brother of a Cabinet official, were allegedly the ones who made off with 60 percent of the P300-million plus project," said my source.

SAMPLE ballots litter the grounds of the Rosario Almario Elementary School in Delpan, Manila, as voters troop to polling precincts.

REM ZAMORA

Binay 'arrests' 7 poll watchers

From page A25

A visibly shaken Juanillo told reporters they got the shirts early yesterday morning, but neither she nor Abenido would say from whom.

Before TV cameras, Binay, who is also president of the United Opposition, said his political opponents were pulling all stops to win. He accused them of electioneering right inside the precinct.

But lawyer Marvin Masangkay of Lakas Kampi denied the allegation, saying the shirts were just for "identification purposes." The shirts don't say "'Vote Kampi,' or anything like that. This is not electioneering," he said.

"Let us not harass them, please," Masangkay told Binay, who replied, "No one is harassing anyone here." The mayor said he would arrest everyone he sees wearing the shirts, and called on Makati residents to do the same.

The Commission on Elections earlier banned the display in polling places of campaign paraphernalia, including shirts which bear the names of candidates or political parties. A few hours later, the Comelec asked a Makati election officer to release the seven.

Lapid, meanwhile, spent a quiet day after casting his vote at the Magallanes Village clubhouse. He later told the INQUIRER that win or lose, he already had a contingency plan. According to the former actor, he plans to retire from politics and would return to acting by 2010.

But Lapid said he was not ready to concede just yet to Binay. "Why would I surrender? "Even if I only get one percent of the vote, I still won't concede."

Lapid, who is not up for reelection as senator until 2010, said his entry into Makati politics would bring about positive change in the financial capital, noting that Binay has served as mayor for nearly 20 years. "*Kahit masarap yan, kung* steak *na lang araw-araw … mauumay ka rin* (Even if it is delicious, if you eat steak everyday, you'll tire of it eventually)," he said.

But Lapid said that he would congratulate Binay "if he wins the people's vote." He added that he expects the same courtesy from Binay.

"If Binay wins, I will not accuse him of cheating. I also wish that he would not accuse me of cheating if I win," Lapid said, adding that he received a death threat over the phone on the eve of election day.

While the threat proved to be an idle one, two cases involving armed men who fired on the houses of a supporter and critic of the mayor were reported to the police yesterday. No one was reported killed or hurt in both incidents. *With Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Kimberly Tan and Paolo Montecillo*

DID YOU KNOW

OF THE 17 CITIES and municipalities in Metro Manila, Quezon City has the most number of registered voters (over one million), followed by Manila (over 960,000). Pateros has the least number of voters—almost 40,000, which is not even one percent of the total number of registered voters in the region (5.7 million).

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Warming seen displacing 1B by 2050

LONDON—AT LEAST ONE BILLION PEOPLE RISK fleeing their homes over the next four decades because of conflicts and natural disasters that will worsen with global warming, a relief agency warned Monday.

In a report, British-based Christian Aid said countries worldwide, especially the poorest, are now facing the greatest forced migration ever—one that will dwarf those displaced by World War II.

In what at the time amounted to "the largest population displacement in modern history," it said, 66 million people were displaced across Europe by May 1945, in addition to the many millions more in China.

Today there are an estimated 163 million people worldwide who have been displaced by factors like conflict, drought and flooding as well as economic development projects like dams, logging and grain plantations, it said.

"We believe that forced migration is now the most urgent threat facing poor people in the developing world," said John Davison, author of "Human Tide: the real migration crisis."

While the figure is already "staggeringly high," the report warned that "in future, climate change will push it even higher.

"We estimate that over the years between now and 2050, a total of one billion people will be displaced from their homes," the 52-page report said.

The figures include 645 million who will migrate because of development projects, and 250 million because of phenomena linked to global warming like floods, droughts and famine, it said.

It said the conflict in western Sudan's Darfur region, which has displaced more than two million people, was not just driven by political forces but also by competition for increasingly scarce water and land to graze animals.

"Security experts fear that this new migration will fuel existing conflicts and generate new ones in the areas of the world—the poorest—where resources are most scarce," said a statement accompanying the report.

"A world of many more Darfurs is the increasingly likely nightmare," it added.

The problem is all the more alarming as those displaced in their own countries have no rights under international law and no official voice, it added.

The report also cited case studies in Colombia, Mali and Burma, also known as Myanmar, as major causes for concern.

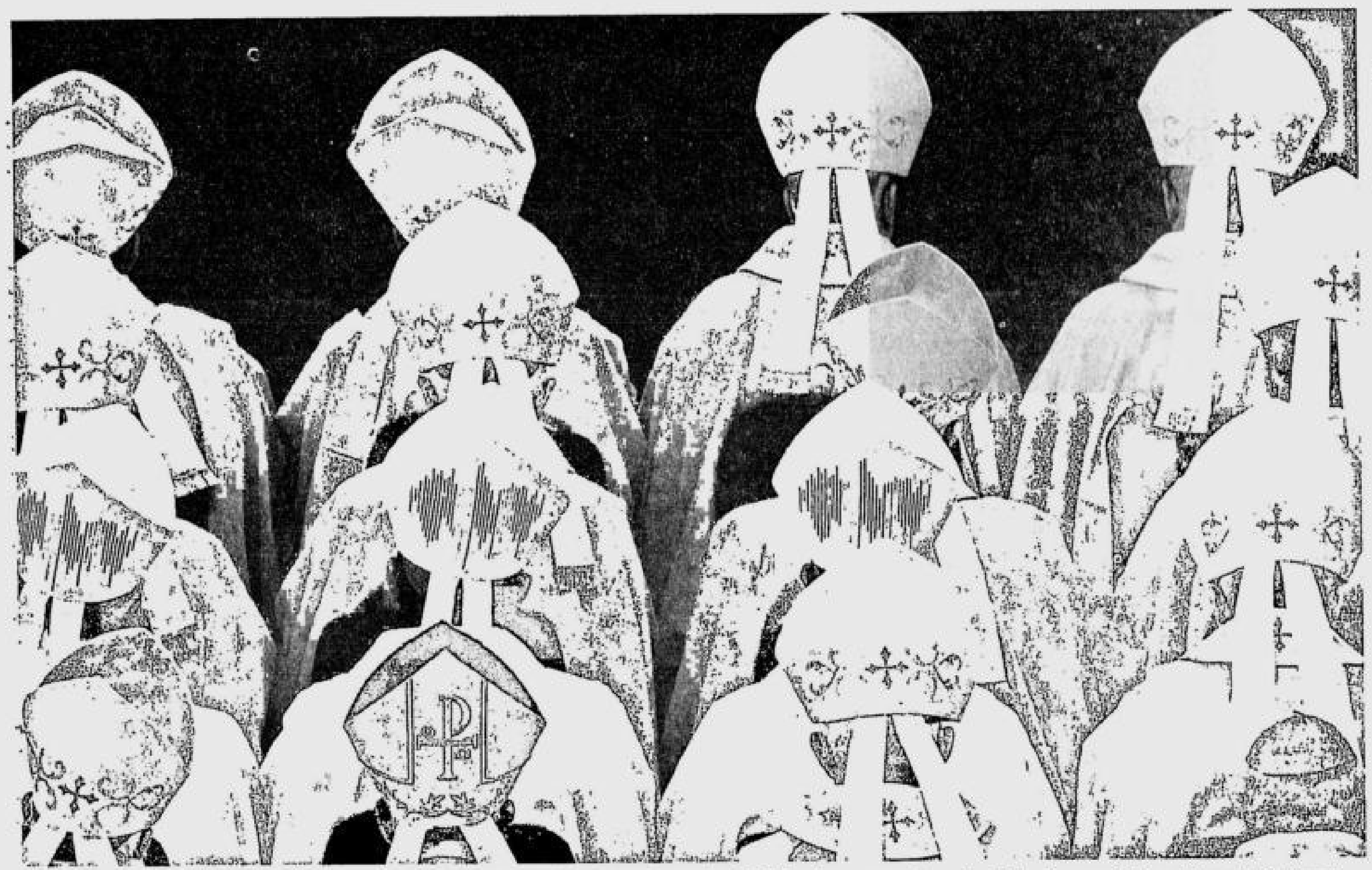
With millions having fled a civil war between paramilitary groups and guerrillas in the last 20 years, it said, Colombians are now seeing land taken by paramilitaries-turned businessmen setting up palm oil and other plantations.

In Burma, it said ethnic minority groups like the Karen had suffered decades of violence, displacement and persecution only to see the military rulers now use the freed space for dams, logging and palm oil plantations.

Climate change, it said, will drive the growth of grain-producing plantations as rich countries will raise demand for bio-fuels over crude oil in a bid to reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

"In Mali, the threat from climate change is more immediate," it said.

Crop yields have fallen sharply with erratic and declining rainfall levels, forcing farmers to move to feed their families. *AFP*



ARCHBISHOPS take part in an open-air Mass conducted by Pope Benedict XVI in the vast esplanade of the Aparecida basilica, at National Sanctuary of Aparecida, in Aparecida del Norte, some 180 km north of Sao Paulo, Brazil, May 13. AFP

Spiritual fulfillment is the way, says Pope

APARECIDA, BRAZIL—POPE Benedict XVI condemned on Sunday both capitalism and Marxism as "systems that marginalize God," in a major speech spurring the Latin American clergy to feed people's spiritual needs as the way to ease poverty and halt the Roman Catholic Church's steady decline in the region.

Speaking to Latin American bishops here for a conference on the church's direction for the next decade, the Pope also condemned not only abortion and contraception but the laws that permit them. Such laws, he said, are "threatening the future of peoples."

The speech was widely anticipated for how Pope Benedict would tackle issues from poverty and social injustice to the evangelical groups eroding Catholicism in some Latin American countries at the rate of 1 percent a year.

And his answers were largely consistent with those he held in his previous life as Joseph Ratzinger, the conservative and contentious cardinal who also expressed one of the most coherent visions for the church. He was elected pope two years ago.

As Ratzinger did in the 1980s, cracking down on liberation theology, which he viewed as incorrectly emphasizing Christ as social redeemer, Pope Benedict stressed first proclaiming Christ as the son of God—even if many of the poor here might like to hear more about social justice.

"What is real?" he mused in the speech, just hours before heading back to Rome after five days in Brazil, the world's most populous Roman Catholic country. "Are only material goods, social and economic and political problems 'reality'?" Without agreeing first on God, he argued to the bishops, society is unable to tackle the problems of poverty and social injustice. *NYT*

Osama alive, keeping low, says rebel

DUBAI—AN ANTI-US AFGHAN rebel leader said he had information that Osama bin Laden is alive but keeping a low profile by not issuing statements, according to a video aired on Sunday.

The al-Qaida leader's long silence has fueled speculation that the world's most-wanted fugitive may have died.

"Based on information I have, I believe Osama is alive," said Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whose forces operate in southeastern Afghanistan near Pakistan, in the undated video broadcast on Al Arabiya television. His remarks were dubbed into Arabic.

"I also believe that it is good that he ... does not appear in the media, and that it is wise that no statements or tapes are issued even after a long while," said Hekmatyar, without elaborating.

Hekmatyar, a former Afghan prime minister, is on a US wanted list and leads an insurgency separate from the Taliban Islamist movement against the Afghan government and foreign troops under the command of Nato and the US military.

In January, Hekmatyar said fighters loyal to his group had helped Bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahri escape a massive US-led hunt in eastern Afghanistan in late 2001.

The most recent video of Bin Laden was released in late 2004, and the last audio recording surfaced in mid-2006. *Reuters*

Taliban confirm Dadullah's death

SPIN BOLDAK, AFGHANISTAN—Taliban sources confirmed on Monday that the movement's top operational commander was killed in a clash with Western and Afghan forces, and said Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar was pondering a replacement.

Mullah Dadullah's killing at the weekend was widely regarded as the biggest blow to the Taliban since they began an insurgency after US-led coalition troops overthrew their radical Islamic government in 2001.

Nicknamed Afghanistan's Al Zarqawi after the slain al-Qaida leader in Iraq, Dadullah was the main architect of suicide bombings, kidnapping of foreigners and Afghans, a series of beheadings and the rise of violence in the south.

"Yes, Mullah Dadullah has been killed," a Taliban source said.

"It is a very big loss for us because Dadullah was a very important commander and Taliban's war planner against coalition and Afghan forces," a senior Taliban commander, who preferred to remain anonymous, told Reuters.

Mullah Omar, whose whereabouts are not known since the Taliban's ouster, was consulting with the Taliban leadership council on Dadullah's replacement.

Dadullah was killed in a clash as part of a widespread US-led operation in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province, the main bastion for the militants and the key drug producing region of the country, the world's leading heroin producer. *Reuters*

OUCH, OUCH!

A young Indian Hindu devotee with a steel rod piercing his cheeks at a procession to honor the Hindu goddess Maha Mariamman (Sheetla Mata), in Amritsar, May 13. Hindus believe that the goddess protects whoever worships her and brings them good health and prosperity. AFP

Japan takes a step toward revising charter

TOKYO—PRIME MINISTER SHINZO Abe scored a victory in his drive to rewrite Japan's pacifist constitution and ease its limits on military actions overseas on Monday when parliament enacted a law outlining steps for a referendum on revising the post-World War II charter.

Abe, at 52 Japan's first prime minister born after the war, has made revising the 1947 constitution a key element in his efforts to boost Japan's role in global security affairs, limited for decades by the constitution's pacifist Article 9.

Drafted by US occupation authorities during one frantic week in February 1947, the constitution has never been altered and procedures for a referendum had not been specified.

Under the referendum law, approved by parliament's upper house on Monday, no vote on revising the constitution would be held for at least three years, but its enactment will increase momentum for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's push to state clearly in the charter Japan's right to maintain a military.

"Since this will take effect in three years, what is important is to deepen the debate among the people even further," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki told a news conference.

Abe has said the LDP would make constitutional reform a focal point in an election for the upper house in July, his first big electoral test since taking office last September.

Abe has also made revising the constitution a core element of his drive to shed a US-imposed "postwar regime" that conservatives say stressed individualism at the expense of Japanese values such as devotion to the public good.

Changing the charter requires approval by two-thirds of the members of both houses of parliament as well as half the voters in a national referendum.

The biggest opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, is not opposed to revising the constitution but differs with the LDP on how it should be altered, while the smaller Social Democratic and Communist parties oppose any changes at all.

"If a majority of the people say 'No' to the sort of society those who want to revise the constitution are trying to create, the constitution cannot be changed," Communist Party leader Kazuo Shii told reporters. "The real battle begins now."

Article 9 renounces the right to wage war to resolve international disputes and bans the maintenance of a military.

But the article has been stretched not only to permit armed forces for self-defense, but to allow overseas military activities, including the deployment by Abe's predecessor of troops on a non-combat mission to a de facto war zone in Iraq.

Japan's closest security ally, the United States, has made clear it would welcome revision of Article 9, but Japanese voters remain cautious. *Reuters*

Girl's disappearance spurs outpouring in UK

LONDON—TRIGGERING REWARD offers in the millions, prayer vigils and appeals at sports events, a little girl's suspected abduction during a family holiday in Portugal has galvanized Britons into action.

Since 4-year-old Madeleine McCann went missing May 3 from her hotel room in the Algarve, her relatives have led a campaign that is drawing growing support from friends, ordinary Britons and celebrities.

"It's becoming something that is almost turning into a national phenomenon," British commentator Matthew D'Ancona said on BBC television.

Stuart Kuttner, managing editor of News of the World and a leading force in efforts to offer money for information leading to her return, said the girl's disappearance has touched a national nerve.

"I think the whole country ... is traumatized by this appalling event, and the support is immense," Kuttner told Sky News television.

The newspaper and wealthy Britons like Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling and Virgin business tycoon Sir Richard Branson have offered a total of 2.5 million pounds (3.66 million euros, $4.95 million) in rewards.

Other Britons have played smaller roles.

They have tied yellow ribbons, balloons and teddy bears onto railings at a war memorial in McCann's hometown of Rowley, central England, worn yellow arm bands at football matches and long-distance races, and attended prayer vigils.

MADELEINE, who disappeared May 3 in Portugal. REUTERS

Members of the public have also been helping relatives of her parents Kate and Gerry in Scotland, England and Ireland to e-mail photographs of the wide-eyed, blond-haired girl to other countries so it can be widely displayed.

The International Family Law Group said on Sunday that it soon would be possible for members of the public to make their own donations.

Relatives said they feared that Maddie, as she is affectionately known, might no longer be in Portugal, but could have been taken through neighboring Spain to some other country where the case has not received much publicity.

The campaign in Britain complements one in Portugal where a vigil has been held and where motorcyclists have driven around the country displaying posters of the girl. *AFP*

US, Iran to hold breakthrough meeting on Iraq

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States and Iran plan to hold landmark talks to thrash out security in war-torn Iraq, but will steer clear of the Islamic republic's nuclear ambitions, officials said Sunday.

The talks "in the next few weeks" are likely to involve Ryan Crocker, the US ambassador to Baghdad, and an Iranian delegation, National Security Council spokesperson Gordon Johndroe said.

President George W. Bush had authorized the dialogue "because we must take every step possible to stabilize Iraq and reduce the risk to our troops, even as our military continue to act against hostile Iranian-backed activity in Iraq," Johndroe said.

The engagement between the two arch-foes should "not be seen as a particular moment but as part of an ongoing process to get Iran to play a constructive role in Iraq," Johndroe added.

Washington said the talks will not address Western suspicions that Iran is covertly trying to build nuclear weapons, as the US government and its European allies mount pressure on Tehran to renounce uranium enrichment.

"There are other places for a discussion on the nuclear issue, and we've been clear what needs to take place for that," State Department spokesperson Leslie Phillips said.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Mohammad Ali Hosseini said Sunday Tehran had agreed to a US request for the talks on Iraq, not long after the nations failed to have substantive contacts at a conference in Egypt.

"Iran has agreed to talk to the US side over Iraq, in Iraq, in order to relieve the pain of the Iraqi people, to support the government and to reinforce security in Iraq," he said, according to the state-run IRNA agency.

Details include a date for the talks would be made public this week, he said. Iran's Mehr news agency said they would take place in Baghdad.

With the Democrats back in control of Congress, the Bush administration has been under pressure to revive engagement with Iran as part of a far-reaching policy overhaul to allow US troops to start leaving neighboring Iraq.

The Iraq Study Group, a 10-member panel of Washington grandees co-chaired by former Secretary of State James Baker, said in a December report that the administration should engage both Iran and Syria "constructively." *AFP*

IRAQI soldiers hold their new rifles, provided by US forces, in Taji US military camp near Baghdad, May 13. AP

More than 1 million Turks hold fresh pro-secular rally

IZMIR, TURKEY—MORE THAN one million pro-secular Turks rallied in the Aegean city of Izmir Sunday, keeping up strong pressure on the Islamist-rooted government after political turmoil forced early elections in July.

Undeterred by a bomb blast on the eve of the protest, demonstrators packed a seafront square in Izmir, Turkey's third largest city, brandishing Turkish flags and portraits of the country's secularist founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

Hundreds showed their support from the sea, sailing along the coast in boats adorned with the red-and-white national flag. Others shouted from rooftops and balconies over roads clogged with buses carrying people from out of town.

Security was stepped up after a bomb ripped through an open-air market in the city on Saturday morning, killing a vendor and injuring 14 other people.

Some 3,000 policemen were deployed across Izmir as coast guard boats patrolled the waters. Air traffic over the demonstration venue was banned.

There has been no claim of responsibility for Saturday's blast. Separatist Kurds, far-left militants as well as Islamist extremists have carried out bomb attacks in Turkey in the past.

Police officials said they did not make a formal count of the demonstrators, but estimated the attendance at more than one million people. Officials had reported a similar turnout at a rally in Istanbul last month.

"Turkey is secular, it will remain secular," protesters shouted, adopting the most popular chant from mass demonstrations held also in the capital Ankara and Manisa in the west.

"We will not surrender the country to reactionary forces," one man shouted.

Banners read, "Unite against bigotry," "We follow Ataturk's path."

The rallies began last month over the prospect of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), the moderate offshoot of a now-banned Islamist movement, propelling one of its own to the presidency.

The presidential election grew into a crisis, the worst the government has faced since coming to power in 2002, as parliament, blocked by an opposition boycott, failed twice to hold a legal vote to elect a president. *AFP*

Rice makes bid to mend US-Russia relations

MOSCOW—US SECRETARY OF State Condoleezza Rice arrives in Russia on Monday seeking to patch up a relationship so strained by differences over Kosovo and missile defense that some have warned of a new Cold War.

Russian officials say they are preparing for calm and positive talks with Rice on her two-day visit, in marked contrast to the shrill tone of exchanges between Moscow and Washington in the past few months.

But Moscow—flush with oil money and once again flexing its muscles as a world power just as Washington is mired in Iraq—warned also that it would not be dictated to by its US visitor.

"We always call on our American partners to talk frankly and not try to force their point of view on others," Mikhail Kamynin, chief spokesperson for the Russian foreign ministry, told Reuters when asked to comment on Rice's visit.

"What we need is not briefings but joint work and a joint search for solutions."

Rice is expected to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and other top officials.

She is the most senior US official to visit Moscow since Putin stunned the West with a speech in Munich in February slamming Washington's foreign policy.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said after listening to the speech it revived his memories of the Cold War and he cautioned against sliding back into that era.

US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried gave a frank assessment last week when he said: "We've had some spectacular differences with Russia recently."

Disagreements over the future of Serbia's Kosovo province, and Russian objections to a US plan to build elements of a missile defense shield in Poland and the Czech Republic are some of the chief irritants.

On missile defense, Putin last month raised the stakes by saying Russia was suspending compliance with a conventional arms control treaty—a move widely seen as the Kremlin's response to the US missile shield plans. *Reuters*

Labour Party to announce Blair successor on June 24

LONDON—BRITAIN'S LABOUR Party will announce its new leader June 24 at a conference in northern England to replace Prime Minister Tony Blair, it said Sunday.

Blair will formally step down as prime minister June 27, handing power to his replacement—almost certain to be Treasury chief Gordon Brown.

But Brown acknowledged at a campaign event Sunday that the unpopular Iraq war had cost his party support and threatened to hamper his own prospects of winning the next national election, expected in 2009 or 2010.

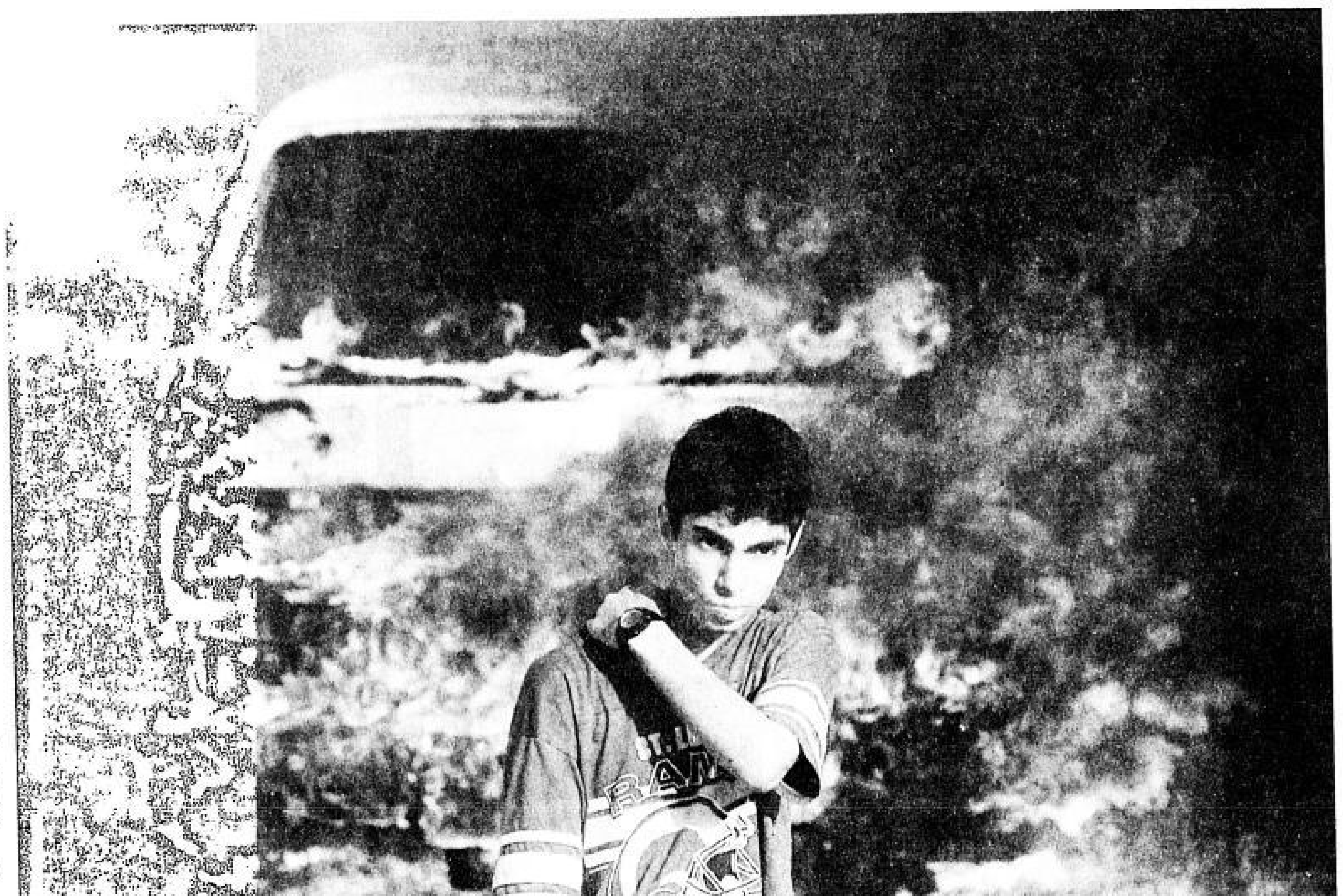
"We have a divided country over Iraq, there's no doubt about that," Brown told an audience in the southern England seaside resort of Brighton.

The prospective leader said British troop levels would continue to fall. "There will be less troops in Iraq next month and the month after," he said.

Nominations of candidates to replace Blair—and his deputy John Prescott—will open Monday, when lawmakers with the backing of 44 fellow Labour lawmakers can put themselves forward.

Two leftist lawmakers are hoping to run against Brown for the Labour leadership and force the party to hold a ballot, but neither man has yet secured the necessary backing.

Six senior lawmakers have said they will compete to replace Prescott, who announced he would also relinquish his position June 27. *AP*



A PALESTINIAN youth stands in front of a burning vehicle during clashes between rival Fatah and Hamas in Gaza City, May 14. AFP

4 killed in bloody Palestinian infighting

GAZA CITY—FOUR PEOPLE were killed in the bloodiest day of Palestinian infighting in weeks on Sunday as deadly clashes between Fatah and Hamas gunmen erupted in Gaza City after a senior militant was shot dead.

Two people died after loyalists of the two rival factions—since March united in a coalition government set up with the express aim of ending such fighting—traded fire near the presidential compound in Gaza City.

Fourteen other Palestinians were wounded in the brief rampage, in addition to the two who died in hospital, medical sources said, updating an earlier casualty toll.

One of those killed was journalist Suleiman al-Asha, a 25-year-old member of the Islamist movement Hamas, the Palestinian journalists' union said, condemning the killing and calling for those responsible to be arrested.

Medics said that most of those wounded on the coastal road were members of Hamas, whose fighters were blamed earlier Sunday for the shooting of a local Fatah fighter in the northern Gaza Strip.

Masked gunmen in Gaza City meanwhile dragged local Hamas leader Ali Asharif from his car, witnesses said. It was not clear who the kidnappers were.

Dozens of other members of both Fatah and Hamas were later also kidnapped in Gaza City, some of whom were held only briefly and then freed, the two parties said, adding that efforts were underway to have the others released.

After night fell, the streets were empty except for masked gunmen armed with anti-tank missiles and rocket-propelled grenades, witnesses said. *AFP*

Pressure rises on Musharraf over violence

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—A DAY after political clashes claimed 39 lives in Karachi, analysts said the violence—and accusations that the government had done little to stop the killings—had put renewed pressure on the president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

News reports said government troops had been in the southern port city, but had not taken action to separate armed pro-government and opposition groups who were shooting at each other. Dawn, an English-language newspaper in Karachi, said troops had "suddenly disappeared from the troubled spots."

The government has not responded to those claims.

The unrest eased Sunday as paramilitary personnel patrolled Karachi, the country's financial hub, and provincial leaders banned public gatherings. But three more people died in sporadic clashes, according to hospital personnel.

The violent clashes were set off Saturday by the arrival of Pakistan's suspended Supreme Court chief justice, Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, who had come to address lawyers of the provincial bar association. In March, Musharraf suspended the justice, who was known for his willingness to take on the government, setting off mostly peaceful protests by lawyers, who accused the government of attacking the judiciary's independence. The president accused the justice of a misuse of power and nepotism, charges that Chaudhry denies.

Analysts on Sunday said the violence in Karachi had significantly worsened the political crisis caused by the justice's suspension and further weakened Musharraf.

"I think he has completely ruined himself," said Rasul Baksh Rais, the head of the department of social sciences at Lahore University of Management Sciences.

"The scenes were brutally contrasting. Young men were dying, collapsing before camera in Karachi while people were dancing on the beat of drums in front of the national parliament," Rais said. *NYT*

A PAKISTANI policeman arrests an activist May 14 after authorities banned gatherings of more than five people in Karachi. AFP

Questions surface over Giuliani's handling of ground zero cleanup

By Anthony DePalma

ANYONE WHO WATCHED Rudolph W. Giuliani preside over ground zero in the days after 9/11 glimpsed elements of his strength—decisiveness, determination, self-confidence.

Those qualities were also on display over the months he directed the cleanup of the collapsed World Trade Center. But today, with evidence that thousands of people who worked at ground zero have become sick, many regard Giuliani's triumph of leadership as having come with a human cost.

An examination of Giuliani's handling of the extraordinary recovery operation during his last months in office shows that he seized control and largely limited the influence of experienced federal agencies. In doing that, according to some experts and many of those who worked in the trade center's ruins, Giuliani might have allowed his sense of purpose to trump caution in the rush to prove that his city was not crippled by the attack.

Administration documents and thousands of pages of legal testimony filed in a lawsuit against New York City, along with more than two dozen interviews with people involved in the events of the last four months of Giuliani's administration, show that while the city had a safety plan for workers, it never meaningfully enforced requirements that those at the site wear respirators, even long after the last survivor was rescued.

At the same time, the administration warned companies working on the pile that they would face penalties or be fired if work slowed. Administration officials also on some occasions gave flawed public representations of the nature of the health threat, even as they privately worried about exposure to lawsuits by sickened workers.

"I would describe it as a conspiracy of purpose," said Suzanne Mattei, director of the New York office of the Sierra Club, which has been critical of how the cleanup was handled. "It wasn't people running around saying, 'Don't do this safely.' But there was a unified attempt to do everything as fast as possible, to get everything up and running as fast as possible. Anything in the way of that just tended to be ignored."

City officials and a range of medical experts are now convinced that the dust and toxic materials in the air around the site were a menace. More than 2,000 New York City firefighters have been treated for serious respiratory problems. Seventy percent of nearly 10,000 recovery workers screened at Mount Sinai Medical Center have trouble breathing.

The question of who, if anyone, is to blame for not adequately protecting the workers could finally be decided in US District Court in Manhattan, where thousands of firefighters, police officers and other recovery workers are suing the city for negligence. *NYT*

China denies infant deaths in mystery epidemic

BEIJING—CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAVE denied reports that at least 26 children have died from a mysterious illness in eastern China as local media Monday accused the government of covering up an epidemic.

Newspaper and Internet reports from Shandong province have said that "many" children have died and hundreds of others have fallen ill from a mysterious disease that has swept through Linyi city since late April.

"The reports on the Internet are pure rumor, this illness is a viral infection of the intestines that commonly occurs in infants and children in the summer and autumn months," the Shandong Health Bureau said on its website in a statement posted Sunday.

The bureau was responding to an Internet report that said at least 26 children had died in Linyi between April 29 and May 11.

Medical authorities in Linyi said the deaths were caused by an outbreak of "hand-foot-mouth disease" which had infected up to 292 children in the city at that time, the Shanghai Morning Post reported.

Hand-foot-mouth disease is a viral infection that usually begins in the throat. It is a relatively common infection caused by the Coxsackie virus, according to the US National Library of Medicine.

The Shanghai Morning Post blamed health officials for failing to inform the public of the disease leading to panic in the city.

Parents were refusing to allow their children out of doors and were avoiding eating beef or lamb believing the illness was linked to foot and mouth disease that affects livestock, the newspaper said.

The Linyi health bureau only began informing media of the "hand-foot-mouth disease" on Friday, after panic had spread to many households, it said.

Internet reports and postings said "SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) has returned," referring to the disease that appeared in China in 2003 and spread globally after Beijing health authorities tried to cover it up.

According to the Yanzhao Metropolitan Daily, the latest outbreak resulted in the death of a 3-year-old child on April 29, sparking rumors that many children had died.

"All levels of government must recognize that by creating a transparent government they can win the confidence of the people and dispel and reduce unstable social elements," the daily said in an editorial. *AFP*

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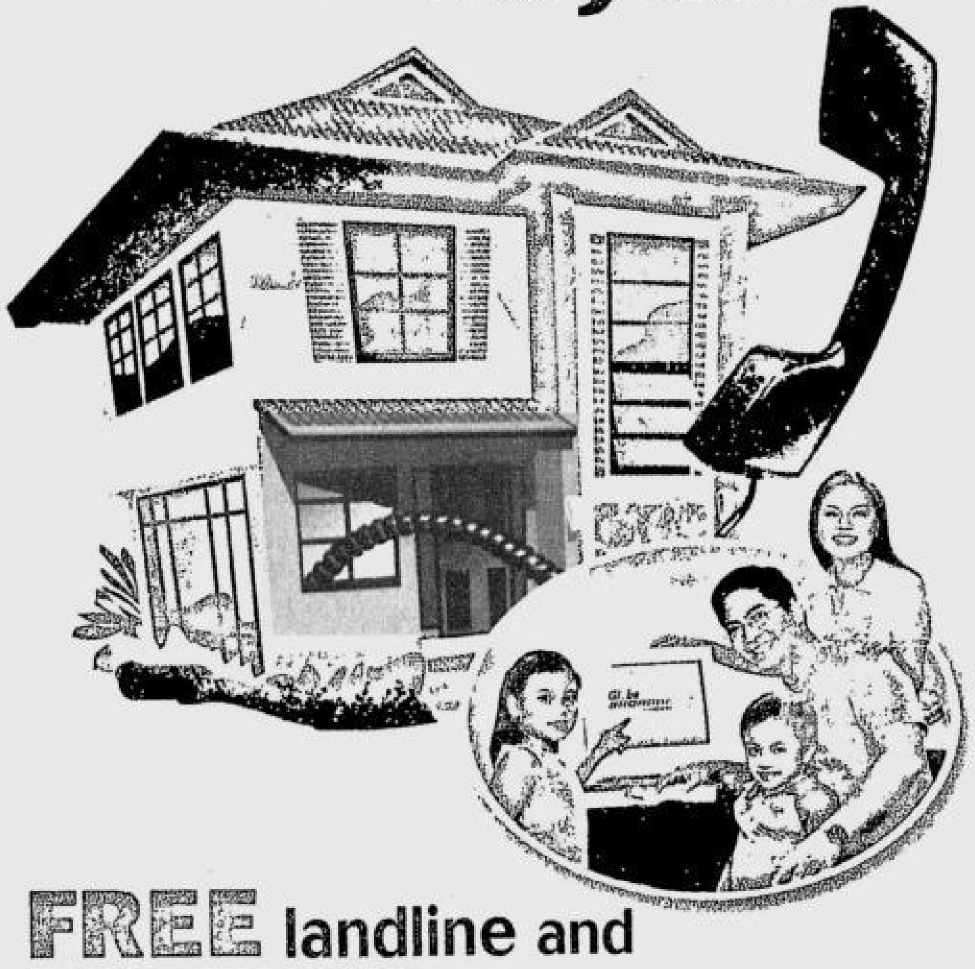

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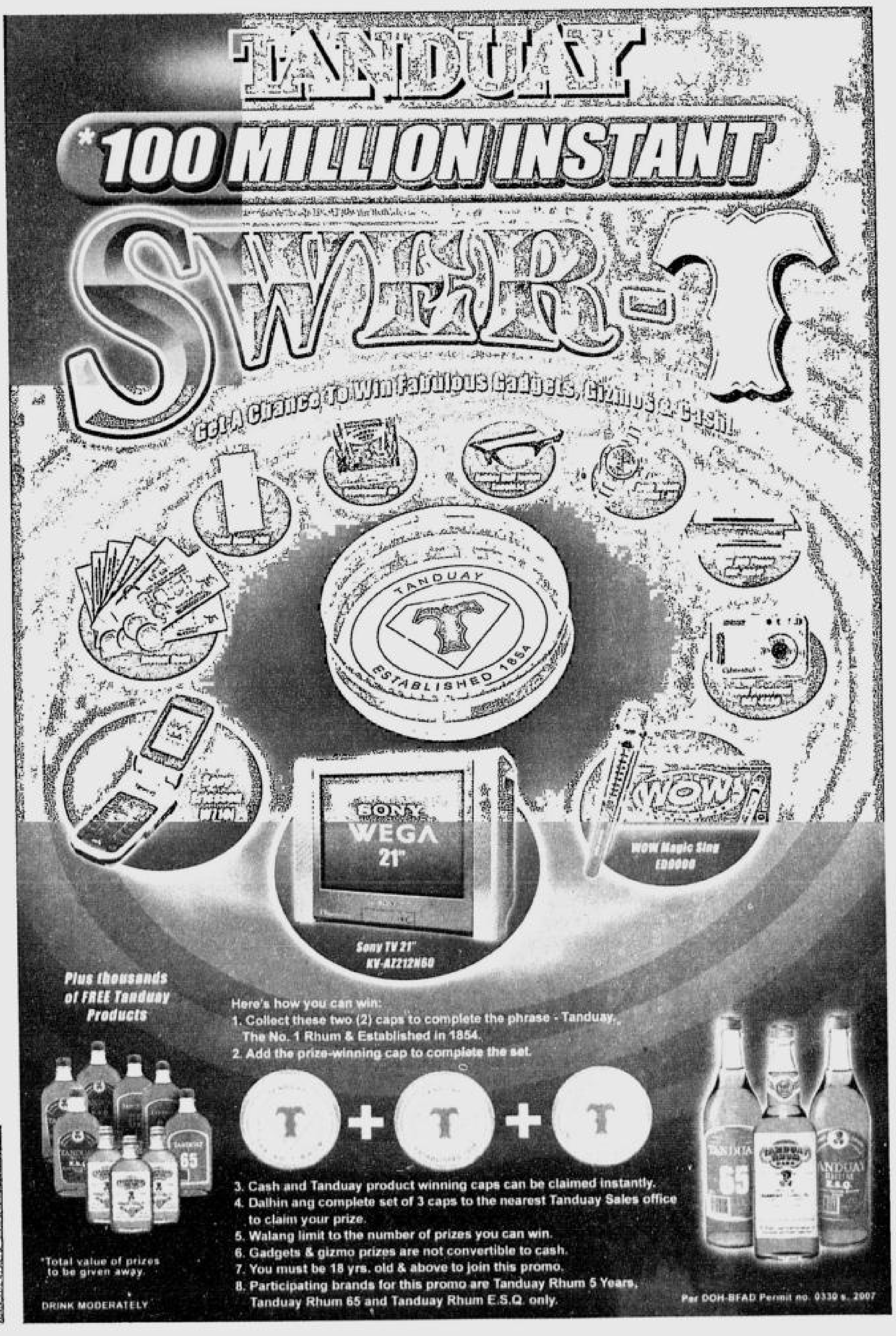

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Mickelson romps off to 2-shot win /A31

SPORTS

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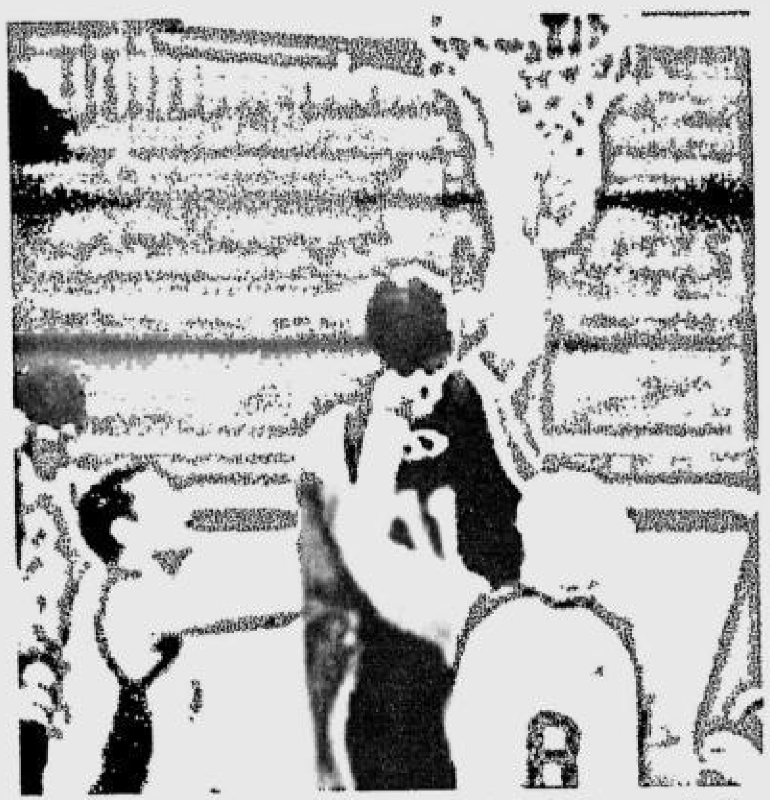
Jazz in sync, move closer toward finals /A35

7-3 giant powers Iran past debuting RP five



IRAN'S "man mountain" of an import Joseph Garth slams one in off a helpless Tony dela Cruz (left) and Asi Taulava. FIBA ASIA.NET

TEHRAN—THE SAN MIGUEL-PHILIPPINE TEAM failed to stop Iran's 7-foot-3 giant and took a 101-88 loss Sunday in the 18th Fiba Asia Champions Cup at the Azadi Sports Complex here.

The towering, 330-lb Joseph Garth from the Dominican Republic unloaded 39 points and had 12 rebounds to lead Iran's Saba Battery Club to a second straight win following its 78-48 rout of Bahrain on Saturday.

But RP coach Chot Reyes said that more positive things are in store for the Nationals

"We have yet to play our best while they (Iranians) played as well as they can play," said Reyes, after the loss that spoiled the Nationals' debut in the eight-nation tournament, Asia's premier club championship.

"Still, I think our guys did pretty well, considering two of our main players in Mark (Caguioa) and Danny (Seigle) haven't played in an international competition before. This being our first international competition as a team, we viewed this as an initial test of our focus, energy and teamwork. Although we lost, I think the team passed (the test)."

The Nationals try to bounce back Monday against the Astana Tigers of Kazakhstan in a game set at 8:45 p.m. (1:15 a.m. Tuesday, Manila time).

The Kazakhs rebounded from a 70-94 loss to Syria's Al Jalaa last

7-3 GIANT/ A33

STANDINGS	W	L
GROUP A		
Lebanon	1	0
Qatar	1	1
India	0	1
GROUP B		
Iran	2	0
Syria	1	0
Kazakhstan	0	1
Philippines	0	1
Bahrain	0	2

GAMES TODAY
(*Tehran time*)
6:30 p.m.—Syria vs. Bahrain
8:45 p.m.—Kazakhstan vs. Philippines

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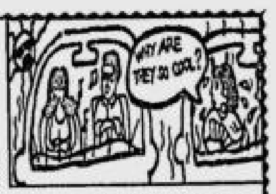

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Simon gives Chunkee Giants fresh sizzle

SIMON: Coming to the fore

PUREFOODS IS NO LONGER A Marquin Chandler-James Yap team.

Peter June Simon, a 6-foot guard from the University of Mindanao, was the Giant who shone brightest for Purefoods in its last two games and kept the team in contention in the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Cup.

In the first half of Purefoods' 117-105 morale-boosting win over Barangay Ginebra Sunday night, Simon unloaded 23 points, including 2-of-2 from three-point range and 3-of-3 from the free throw area, as the Giants raced to a 71-46 lead after two quarters.

That 25-point cushion was enough for the defending champions to survive a spirited Ginebra rally in the end game.

Simon capped his best game of the tournament by topscoring for the Chunkee Giants with 31 points, ahead of Chandler and Yap, who had 30 markers each.

Simon also grabbed 10 rebounds after going 11-of-16 from the field as the Giants slapped on the league-leading Kings (10-4) their second straight loss.

For that remarkable showing, the Purefoods guard was chosen by the PBA Press Corps as the Accel-TNT Player of the Week for the period May 6-13.

Prior to Simon's Sunday night explosion, the former Philippine Basketball League (PBL) Most Valuable Player also came up with a team-high 22 points in a 77-80 losing cause against the Coca-Cola Tigers last May 4.

Simon's heroics couldn't have come at a perfect time.

By beating the Kings, the Giants raised their record to 5-10 overall and moved within reach of at least a berth in the wild-card phase.

Purefoods holds a one-game lead over Sta. Lucia (4-9) and a two-game cushion against cellar-dweller Welcoat Paints (3-10).

"We badly needed that win because we're fighting for survival," said Purefoods mentor Ryan Gregorio.

"We're no longer looking for the top two or the top five. We're just looking to survive and make the wild card."

With the way Simon has been playing, there's no doubt Gregorio's wish will be granted.

Moneymen shoot for 7th win vs Sealers

CEBUANA LHUILLIER-PERA PADALA AND HENKEL SISTA, BOTH ON A ROLL, COLLIDE today in the PBL Unity Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

STANDINGS	W	L
C Lhuillier	6	2
Harbour	6	2
Henkel Sista	4	4
Toyota Bal	4	4
Burger King	4	4
Dazz	2	6
Magnolia	2	6

GAMES TODAY
(*The Arena, San Juan*)
2 p.m.—CL-Pera Padala vs Henkel Sista
4 p.m.—Dazz 'Sang Patak vs Harbour Centre

The Moneymen try to keep a piece of the lead when they shoot for a fourth straight win at 2 p.m. against the Super Sealers, who have four consecutive wins after a 0-4 start.

The Cebu-based squad shows the way with Harbour Centre at 6-2 and coach Luigi Trillo said the surge started when the team started to put premium on defense.

"Our offense came because of our defense," noted Cebuana coach Luigi Trillo of the Moneymen, who are coming off a 40-point demolition of San Miguel-Magnolia.

The defending champion Harbour five will also try to improve its semifinal bid in a 4 p.m. tussle versus Dazz 'Sang Patak.

While their six-game winning streak is gone, the Batang Pier are slightly favored over the Kitchen Specialists, who share the cellar with San Miguel-Magnolia at 2-6.

As things stand, the Moneymen and Batang Pier only need to win two of their last four games to clinch a playoff for an outright semifinal slot.

The top two teams at the end of the elimination round will secure automatic slots in the Final Four, while the rest slug it out in the quarterfinals.

Although two games behind the leaders, Henkel Sista looks poise to gain more ground with new Fil-Am recruit Ryan Reyes towing the Super Sealers into a tie with idle Toyota Balintawak and Burger King at 4-4.

But coach Caloy Garcia made it clear that the Super Sealers cannot pin their semifinal hopes on Reyes .

"If we want to go far, we have to play as a team," said Garcia. "We can't rely on Ryan all the time."

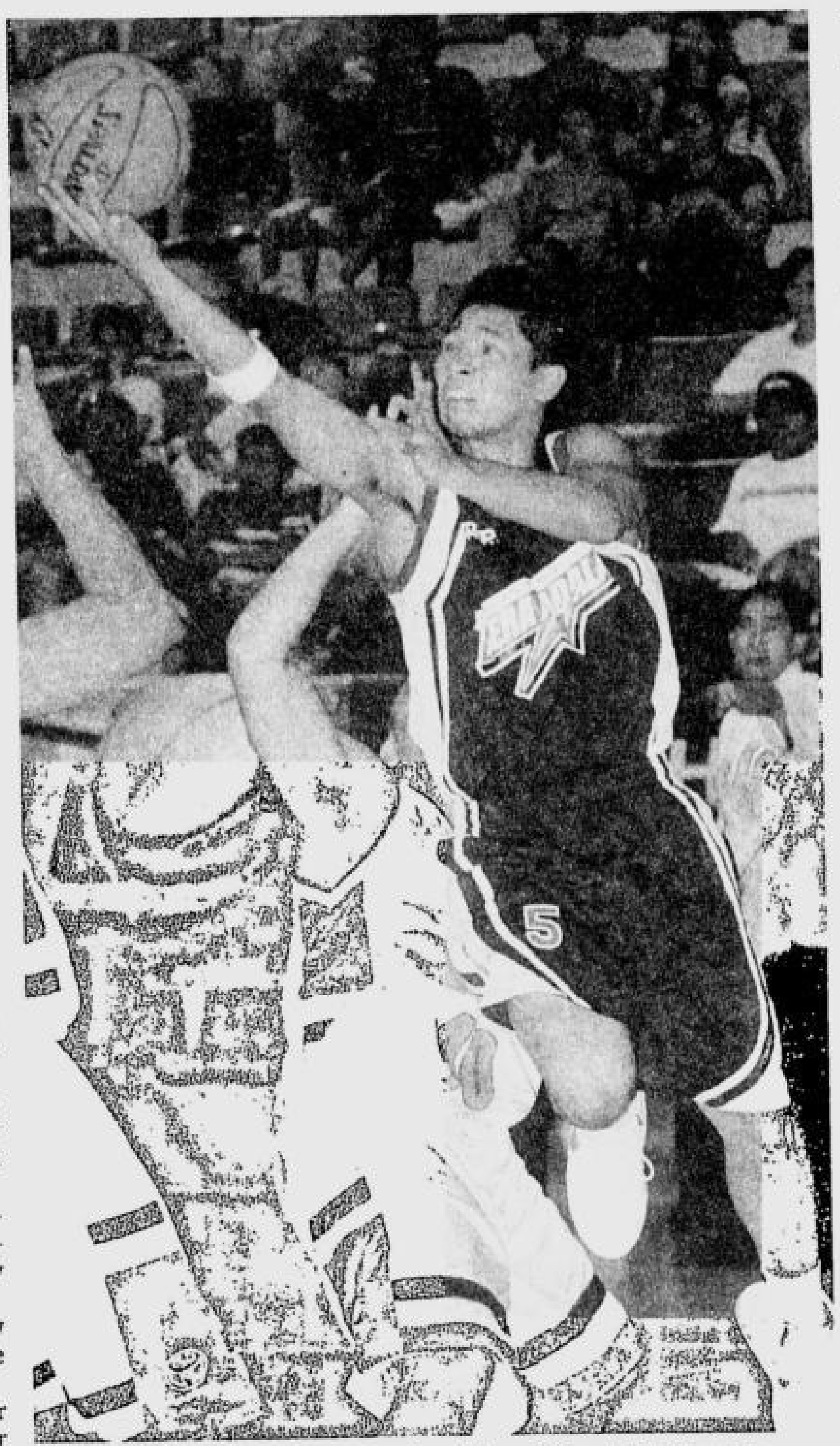
The hot-shooting Reyes, who arrived from California two weeks ago, averaged 18 points after missing only one shot in 14 attempts from the field in two games.

The Moneymen were unstoppable last Saturday, crushing San Miguel-Magnolia, 103-63, behind the combined efforts of Ken Bono, Macky Escalona, Erwin Sta. Maria and Ariel Capus.

Meanwhile, Harbour Centre and Dazz saw their respective streaks come to an end over the weekend.

A six-game winning spree that stretched for three weeks ground to a halt when Batang Pier bowed to Toyota Balintawak with a 69-63 decision last Saturday.

Jasmine W. Payo



CEBUANA Lhuillier star Macky Escalona drives off Toyota Balintawak's Christian Coronel in a recent game at the Olivarez gym. INQUIRER PHOTO/ RYAN LIM

Fitness First tops Subic Bay triathlon

FORMER NATIONAL TRIATHLON CHAMPion Ani de Leon and Ige Lopez powered Fitness First to the best time in the team competition of the recent Subic Bay International Triathlon.

De Leon turned in the fastest time of 2:42.36 in the 1.5-kilometer swim-40K bike-10K run and Lopez clocked 2:21.21 as Fitness First finished with a frontrunning cumulative time of 9:56.32.

Their teammates Rene Tayag and Mark Ellis clocked 2:24.43 and 2:27.52, respectively, to round out the performance of Fitness First which beat 2006 champion Polo Tri Superstars of Nona Torres, Rune Stroem, Jonjon Rufino and Burke Fishburn. Polo Tri timed 10:26.33.

Third place went to Herbalife-Adidas team that included Monica Torres, Rayson Galdones, Joey Singian, Dennis Trojos and Jojo Macalintal, who finished just a minute behind Polo Tri in 10:26.29.

In relay teams, Loy Rafols, John Dalayoan and Kaye Lopez took the crown with a total time of 2:15.32, followed by the CMG Team of Augusto Benedicto, Bombee Narciso and Toti Sanchez in 2:26.25. Chikka Chikka Lingling's William Woods and Edwin Santasas timed 2:32.44 for third place.

Aside from Torres, who took the 20 to 24 age group crown, other female champions were Shannon Arnold (25-29), Tonichi Balaguer (30-34), former national duathlon champion Rizzo Tangan (35-39) and Sen. Pia Cayetano (40 and over).

Jay-Ar Obial took the 20 to 24 male age group title. The other male winners were Jefferson Valdes (25-29),Ige Lopez (30-34), Christopher Pollard (35-39), Lorenzo Ocampo (40-44), Rune Stroem (45-49), Neils Have (50-54), Ernesto Rivera (55-59), and Roy Lucero (60 and over).

Jockeys need a helping hand

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I AM GLAD TO KNOW THAT THE HORSE racing community recently honored the country's forgotten jockeys, including the veteran Elpidio S. Aguila and the battle-tested Jesus C. Guce, who suffered serious injuries while riding their mounts.

Aguila, who was hurt in 2006, is still bedridden, while Jesus, who was injured in 2005, is luckier because he could stand up and walk with help from an aide.

Other riders who were honored during the successful 2nd Jockey's Day last May 6 at the Santa Ana Park included one-time Gentleman Jockey of the Year, the late Juaning Macaraig; CH Bernabe Jr., EJ Tijam, TO Basco, EG Daquis, GR Raborar and PL Guce.

* * *

A jockey's life is fraught with danger. Most often jockeys are injured or paralyzed when they are trampled under the hooves of horses.

"To pilot a racehorse," wrote American book author Laura Hillenbrand, a two-time winner of the Eclipse Award, the highest journalistic award in the United States for thoroughbred racing, "is to ride a half-ton catapult. It is without question one of the most formidable feats in sports.

"The extraordinary athleticism of the jockey is unparalleled: a study of the elements of athleticism conducted by Los Angeles exercise physiologists and physicians found that of all major sports competition, jockeys may be, pound for pound, the best overall athletes. They have to be."

To begin with, she added, there are demands on balance, coordination and reflex.

"A horse's body is a constantly shifting topography, with a bobbing head and neck and roiling muscle over the shoulders, back and rump. On a running horse, a jockey does not sit in the saddle, he crouches over it, leaning all of his weight on his toes, which rest on the thin metal bases of stirrups dangling about a foot from the horse's topline. When a horse is in full stride, the only parts of the jockey that are in continuous contact with the animal are the insides of the feet and ankles—everything else is balanced in midair."

* * *

Before that near-fatal mishap in 2006, ES Aguila, also known as "The Eagle" in racing circles, has had a checkered career. Then pushing 40 years old, Aguila rode the phenomenal Wind Blown owned by sportsman Hermie Esguerra.

"*Nasakyan ko siya sa novatos* (I was able to ride him when he was just a newcomer)," recalled Aguila, one of seven different jockeys who piloted Wind Blown to record-breaking feats. Now retired to stud at the Herma Farms in Lipa City, Wind Blown, a bay horse by Hazm out of Wind in My Hair, won total earnings of P18,978,695.50 in 49 starts.

"*Totoy na totoy pa siya* (He was very, very young)," Aguila said.

In fact, Wind Blown lost three consecutive times in six starts, including a loss to Great Year, owned by the late movie great Fernando Poe Jr.

But those early setbacks did not dampen the jockey's expectations on the gangling, ugly-looking horse because he could sense even then that Wind Blown has the makings of a champion galloper. Aguila, who rode Wind Blown only five times, was proven right.

I admire jockeys for their fearlessness. Jockeys never speak about fear, danger or pain, even among themselves. In their line of work, jockeys would not allow themselves to admit they are scared. A jockey could smell fear in one of their own and would use it to the hilt to intimidate a rival during a race.

* * *

I also admire jockeys for their fortitude and sacrifice in order to practice their trade.

Because jockeys are not only naturally tiny, but needs to weigh about 100 lbs, they are always on a strict diet. During a race day, jockeys take only a light dinner, with some eating but eggs. Drinking too much water, because of its weight, is a prime enemy.

Others poke their fingers down their throats to vomit up their meals, while others chew gum to stimulate salivation. Still, many resort to the time-tested sweating rituals like taking steamed baths or doing regular road works.

* * *

I would like to congratulate my longtime friend, hotelier Biboy Enriquez, for winning the recent eighth leg of the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines 5-Cock Derby at the Makati Coliseum. Finishing with a clean slate, Biboy fielded his famed Firebird-Jimafer BJ together with Jet Fernando and Paul Dominguez to cop the championship. Welcome, too, to the cockers from abroad who will be competing in several big time derbies here, including the World Slasher Cup on May 22, 24 and 26 at the Araneta Coliseum. Former world champions Roger Roberts and the ageless Ray Alexander will lead the powerhouse contingent from the United States.

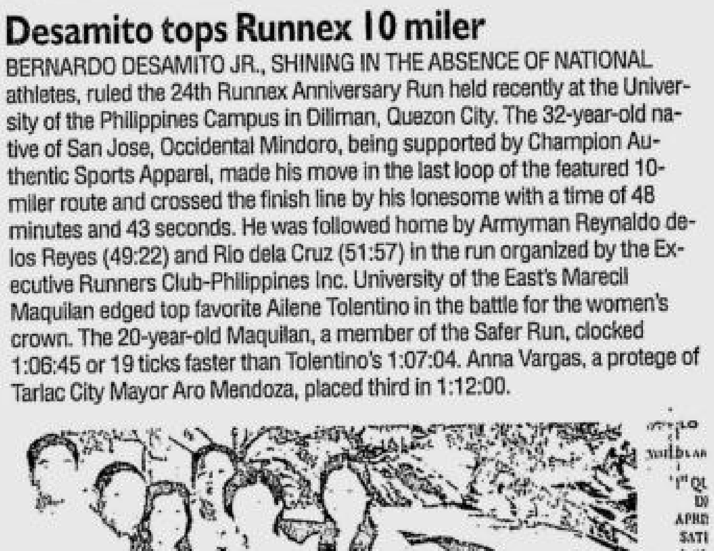
SPORTSWATCH

Fund drive for RP SEAG bets to go on

BASED ON A PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S HUSband Mike Arroyo, the fund-raising campaign of athletes seeking slots to the Beijing Olympics will officially begin today. Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez has vowed to carry out the fund drive for the country's top bets even if Mr. Arroyo has not fully recovered from a recent heart surgery. "We are not turning our backs on our commitment to send our athletes abroad for training," said Ramirez. No details were given on the mechanics of the fund drive but Ramirez said the PSC will initially shoulder the overseas training of the first batch of athletes and coaches bound for China. A total of 29 athletes and 10 coaches from diving, weightlifting, gymnastics, wushu, swimming and fencing are scheduled to report for training in various Chinese training facilities beginning May 28. *June Navarro*

Desamito tops Runnex 10 miler

BERNARDO DESAMITO JR., SHINING IN THE ABSENCE OF NATIONAL athletes, ruled the 24th Runnex Anniversary Run held recently at the University of the Philippines Campus in Diliman, Quezon City. The 32-year-old native of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, being supported by Champion Authentic Sports Apparel, made his move in the last loop of the featured 10-miler route and crossed the finish line by his lonesome with a time of 48 minutes and 43 seconds. He was followed home by Armyman Reynaldo delos Reyes (49:22) and Rio dela Cruz (51:57) in the run organized by the Executive Runners Club-Philippines Inc. University of the East's Marecil Maquilan edged top favorite Ailene Tolentino in the battle for the women's crown. The 20-year-old Maquilan, a member of the Safer Run, clocked 1:06:45 or 19 ticks faster than Tolentino's 1:07:04. Anna Vargas, a protege of Tarlac City Mayor Aro Mendoza, placed third in 1:12:00.



GOLF CLUB RAFFLE WINNER: Juanita Ngo (fifth from left) receives from Shean Bedi, member of Camp John Hay Golf Club's sports and games committee, the key to a brand-new Honda Civic she won during the club's first-quarter raffle. Looking on are (from left), club accountant Sim Langbayan, sports and games committee members Eve Aquino and Romy Tio and Charlene Mary Ngo.

Orcollo rips foe, faces Chamat next

ORCOLLO

FILIPINO DENNIS ORCOLLO trounced David Reljic of Australia, 11-5, at the start of the 2007 Enjoypool.com (formerly Billiard Congress of America) 9-ball championships yesterday at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

With the win, the 28-year-old native of Bislig, Surigao del Sur, sealed a clash with Marcus Chamat in the next round after the Swede slipped past American Austin Murphy, 11-9.

The survivor of the Orcollo-Chamat clash will face the winner between Niels Feijen of the Netherlands and Tony Crosby of the United States.

Feijen opened his bid by crushing American Richard Broumpton, 11-3, while Crosby downed countryman Timmy Hall, 11-4.

Other top players who won their initial assignments were Mika Immonen, Paul Potier, Robb Saez, Earl Strickland, Larry Nevel, Mike Davis, Rodney Morris, Ronnie Wiseman and Thomas Engert.

Five other Filipinos are in the 64-man field—Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Jose "Amang" Parica, Santos Sambajon, Marlon Manalo and Warren Kiamco.

The 44-year-old Bustamante takes on Jeremy Jones, Paric faces Allen Hopkins, Sambajon tackles Bruce Wilkinson, Manalo meets Hisashi Kusano and Kiamco battles Brady Gola today.

Orcollo is out to erase the memories of his lopsided defeat to Taiwanese Yang Shing-chun in their race-to-60, 9-ball duel at the Gateway Mall in Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City last April.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1 —(Qrt/Tri) —Kapit Bahay (2), Playing Cool (1), Silver Cho Cho (3), Happy Again (4)

Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/ Tri) —Modern Classic (7), Desert Breeze (8), Magic Dancer (1), Rebound (5), Reign Of Roses (2)

Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri) —Tambuli (6), Shake Mi Spaghetti (5), Sister Moon (9), Hurry My Love (2), Showgirl (4)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/ Tri) —Ingay Ingay 98), Manila's Smile (9), Sound Value (7), Yao Man (3), Mas Que Nada (1)

Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Real Black (8), Joint Account (3), Rivendel (7), Sunline (6)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/ Tri) —Yellow Submarine (9), Mr. Chingbol (10), Miata (2), Janelle's Episode (7), Sir Barbaro (1)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/ Tri) —Carmelita 911), Golden Lance (10), Words of Joy 93), Bombshell Beauty (9), Selfmade (12)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/ Tri)—King Anthony (1), War Bird (14), BMI Baby (12), Dato's Pride (10), La Signorina (2), Apple Splash (5)

7-3 giant powers Iran past debuting RP five

From page A31

Saturday by whipping Bahrain's Al Musarraq, 96-74, on Sunday.

"Kazakhstan is an entirely different challenge," said Reyes. "They have two Russian imports and, though they are tall, they are mobile. Also, their wingmen have found their touch after struggling against Syria.

"But the real challenge is how our boys will react after that loss to Iran. *Ganyan talaga sa* (It's like that in) international competitions, you don't have much time to adjust."

Kazakhstan does not have a hulking giant like Garth, who was benched when Iran outplayed Bahrain in their Group B debut.

Asi Taulava, Mick Pennisi and Enrico Villanueva, the Philippines' big men, just didn't have the size to contain Garth. They also ended up battered and bruised defending the Iranian import.

"I'm the biggest guy in the PBA and I've never ever before had to hold off somebody with two hands," said the 6-9, 260-lb Taulava.

"He hurt my (right) shoulder on his first spin against me," said Pennisi, a known bruiser for Red Bull. "So the next time up, I gave him a hard slap and it's my whole arm that stung. I go, 'Oh, I'm sorry' and he just brushes it off like a fly."

Taulava also remained upbeat that his team will accomplish its ultimate mission of doing well here and using the experience as springboard for next week's Seaba tilt and July's Fiba Asia championship.

"They're not going to have somebody that big, that strong, that solid in the Fiba Asia," said the Talk 'N text center.

Dondon Hontiveros had 23 points and Caguioa 19 for the Nationals, who came out tight but flashed their form in the second half.

It was Garth who was the big difference with his mini-hooks and backboard-bending dunks.

Garth made 15 of 17 shots and hit nine of 11 free throws, hitting 10 of his points after the Filipinos whittled a 51-36 Saba lead to 52-56.

Caguioa scored eight points and Hontiveros six in the RP rally that fanned the hopes of the few Filipino fans here led by consul Renato Dueñas.

But Garth simply took over with his three-point play capping a 19-7 run that gave Iran a 75-59 spread. The Iranians later stretched it to 91-73 with 3:26 left in the game.

The scores:

IRAN 101—Garth 39, S. Bahrami 17, Nzafat 16, A. Bahrami 9, Muoneka 9, Afagh 8, Afradi 2, Veisi 1.

SAN MIGUEL-RP 88—Hontiveros 23, Caguioa 19, Pennisi 13, De Ocampo 7, Raymundo 6, Taulava 5, Ritualo 3, Alapag 2, Dela Cruz 2, Villanueva 2, Helterbrand 0.

Quarters: 32-25, 51-38, 78-64, 101-88

MEMBERS of the San Miguel-RP squad pose for posterity before their depature for Iran. The Nike-outfitted cagers are mentored by Chot Reyes.

PLEDGE OF AID

Peping expects help of poll bets

By June Navarro

BESIDES WINNING THE GUBERNATORIAL race in Tarlac, Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr.'s other election wish is for candidates who offered reforms for Philippine sports to back up their words with concrete results.

COJUANGCO

The Philippine Olympic Committee president has urged senatorial candidates who included sports development in their political agenda not to give the athletes false hopes.

"I hope the interest of these candidates in sports continues even after the elections," said Cojuangco. "If they made the promise to support sports, they should keep it."

During the campaign, Genuine Opposition candidates Chiz Escudero and Loren Legarda called for the infusion of more funds in sports while Team Unity's Prospero Pichay vowed to extend his support to other sports aside from chess and surfing.

Actor and independent candidate Richard Gomez also promised reforms in grassroots level, pointing out that sports is a crucial component in nation building.

Pichay is the president of the national sports associations for chess and surfing while Gomez sits as vice chair of the Philippine Amateur Fencing Association.

Cojuangco said sports-minded legislators could help boost government funding for sports.

The former Tarlac congressman is planning to build a national training facility in Bamban, Tarlac, for 10 priority Olympic sports after the elections.

The 3,500-hectare training facility area inside the sprawling Clark Field will also have a sports complex, athletes' dormitory and village and a housing project for the families of the athletes who have made the country proud.

Donaire gets crack at Darchinyan

FILIPINO-AMERICAN NONITO DONAIRE gets a chance to wrest the IBF and IBO flyweight titles from the hard-punching Vic "Raging Bull" Darchinyan when they meet on July 7 in a 12-round bout in Las Vegas.

Donaire (17-1, 10 KOs) solidified his crack at Darchinyan with a first-round technical knockout of journeyman Kevin Hudgins last Friday at the Reno Events Center in Reno, Nevada.

The 24-year-old Donaire, born in Gen. Santos City but now fighting out of San Leandro, California, holds the NABF superflyweight title. He had earlier vowed to avenge his brother Glenn's defeat to Darchinyan.

Darchinyan (28-0, 22 KOs), one of the hardest-punching flyweight in the world, has beaten three Filipino fighters so far— Sylvio Glenogo (TKO 2), Diosdado Gabi (TKO 8) and Glenn Donaire (technical decision 6).

A jaw injury suffered by Glenn Donaire forced the referee to stop the fight held at Mandalay Bay last year in the sixth round and to award it to Darchinyan, who was ahead on points on the cards of all three judges. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

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Pettersen clinches first LPGA crown

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA—SUZANN Pettersen made a 1½-foot putt for par after Jee Young Lee missed one from about 2 feet on the third extra hole, giving the Norwegian her first victory in 82 career starts on the US LPGA Tour on Sunday.

Fil-American Dorothy Delasin shot a 73 and wound up 10 shots behind Pettersen at 284. Delasin pocketed $20,547 (about P1 million) while Filipina Jennifer Rosales settled for $9,161 after struggling with a 78 and a 288 total.

Both players parred the par-4 18th on the first two extra holes of the Michelob Ultra Open, and Lee seemed to have the upper hand the third time around when she hit her approach to about 12 feet while Pettersen's ball rested against the high grass at the edge of the fringe.

Pettersen's putt rolled just past the cup on the right side, leaving 1½ feet, and Lee's attempt at the victory missed to the right, leaving a short putt for the tie.

South Korea's Lee quickly went to knock her ball in, seemed to rush and it skated by on the right as the crowd gasped and she looked up, astonished.

Pettersen then stepped up, made hers for the victory and pumped her right fist as the ball disappeared in the hole, then doubled over in apparent disbelief.

"I was like, 'Wow! It happened,'" she said of her first victory, which followed many close calls in her short career, some as demoralizing as the way Lee lost.

Pettersen, second twice in her first seven events this year, closed with a bogey-free 6-under 66 in the Safeway International in March, but lost when top-ranked Lorena Ochoa birdied four of the last five holes. Pettersen then blew a three-shot lead with a bogey-double bogey-bogey-par finish at the Kraft Nabisco—a major—the next week.

"It was a great learning experience," she said, and one that helped her on Sunday, even as the tension built when her bogey-free 3-under 68 got her into the playoff.

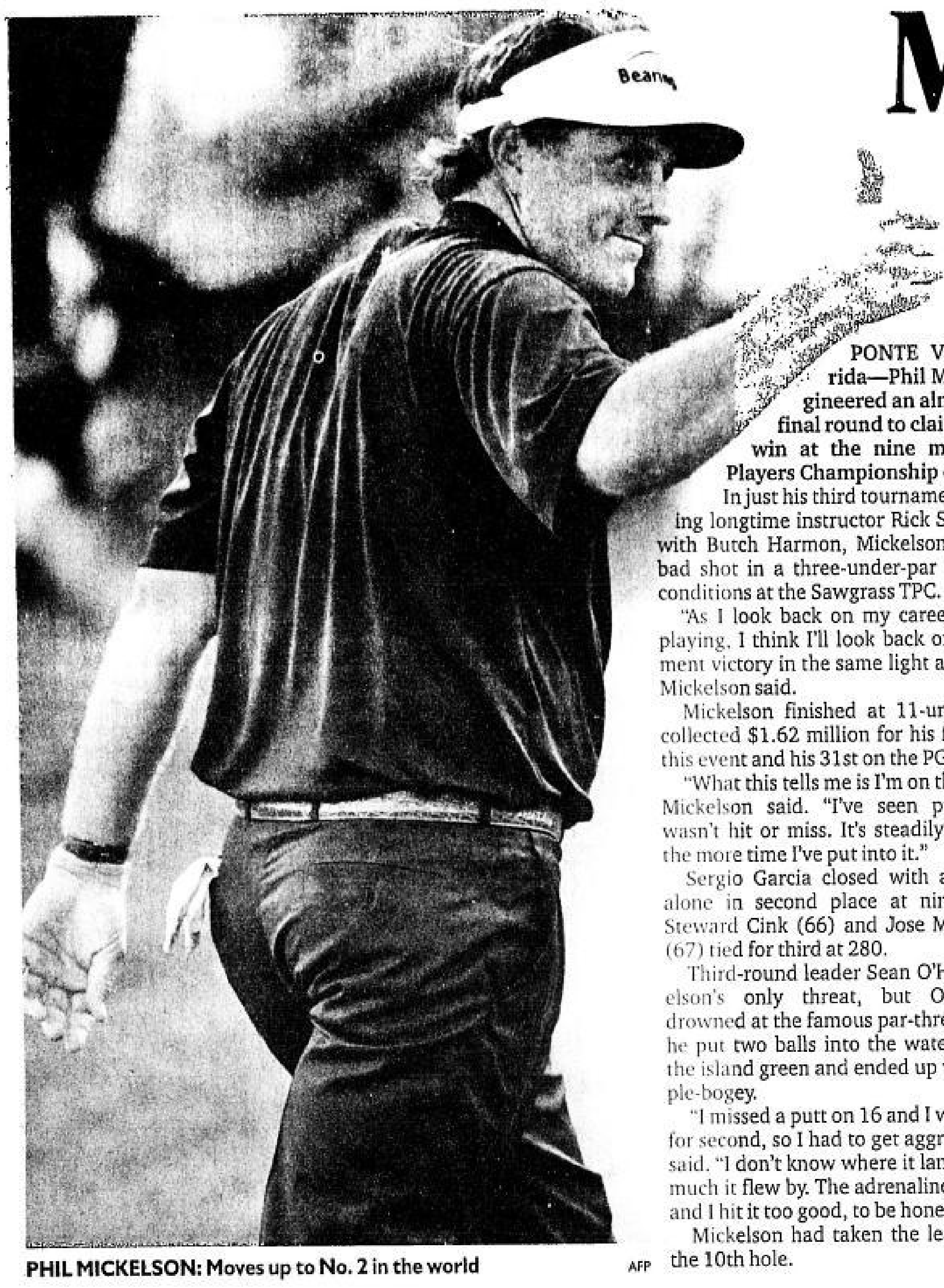
"I was surprisingly very calm all day," she said.

Not so for Lee, who joined most every other contender in making mistakes that killed any momentum she might have had. She had four bogeys and three birdies in a 72, the last immediately after a bogey at No. 14 briefly gave Pettersen a one-shot lead.

It was the only time she led all day until the final putt disappeared. *AP*

SUZANN Pettersen: The first is sweetest. AFP

Mickelson romps off to 2-shot win


PHIL MICKELSON: Moves up to No. 2 in the world AFP

PONTE VEDRA, FLORIDA—Phil Mickelson engineered an almost flawless final round to claim a two-shot win at the nine million dollar Players Championship on Sunday.

In just his third tournament since sacking longtime instructor Rick Smith to work with Butch Harmon, Mickelson hardly hit a bad shot in a three-under-par 69 in perfect conditions at the Sawgrass TPC.

"As I look back on my career after I stop playing, I think I'll look back on this tournament victory in the same light as the majors," Mickelson said.

Mickelson finished at 11-under 277 and collected $1.62 million for his first victory at this event and his 31st on the PGA Tour.

"What this tells me is I'm on the right path," Mickelson said. "I've seen progression. It wasn't hit or miss. It's steadily gotten better the more time I've put into it."

Sergio Garcia closed with a 66 to finish alone in second place at nine-under 279. Steward Cink (66) and Jose Maria Olazabal (67) tied for third at 280.

Third-round leader Sean O'Hair was Mickelson's only threat, but O'Hair's hopes drowned at the famous par-three 17th, where he put two balls into the water surrounding the island green and ended up with a quadruple-bogey.

"I missed a putt on 16 and I was not playing for second, so I had to get aggressive," O'Hair said. "I don't know where it landed or by how much it flew by. The adrenaline was pumping and I hit it too good, to be honest."

Mickelson had taken the lead for good at the 10th hole.

TIGER WOODS: Late recovery AP

A meaningless bogey at the final hole was the only blemish on his card as he improved to second in the world rankings behind Tiger Woods.

O'Hair, who entered the day with a one-shot lead over Mickelson, was two shots back heading to No. 17.

"I was in a good spot to win and unfortunately I got kicked in the teeth," O'Hair said. "I had an opportunity and it didn't happen. I'm not going to let this bother me."

O'Hair bogeyed the 18th to shoot 76 and fall all the way to 11th at 5-under 283.

Mickelson was in fine form early, splitting the fairway with three of his first four drives.

He birdied the first two holes and added birdies at the par-4 seventh and par-5 11th to put a little distance between himself and O'Hair.

Garcia was delighted with his finish, which included four successive birdies from the 14th.

"I got really hot," he said after hitting all but one green in regulation. "I barely missed a fairway, barely missed a green the last two days. I'm very pleased with that. I felt comfortable all week with my swing."

However, Garcia could only rue the double bogey he made to end the third round, wondering what might have been if not for that.

Meanwhile, Woods finally produced the sort of form that had eluded him all week, shooting a five-under 67.

It was too late to have any real meaning, but to listen to Woods, his long game was in pretty good shape all week. He could not say the same about his putting.

"I knew I could shoot a round in the 60s if I'd just make a few putts, and today I did," Woods said after finishing tied for 37th, 11 strokes off the pace.

Luke Donald, the only British player within striking distance at the start of the day, never got his charge off the launch pad, shooting 74 to finish tied for 16th at 3-under 285.

Ian Poulter (69) was two shots further back, with Irishman Padraig Harrington (70) tied for 52nd on two-over 290. *AFP*

Hamilton overtakes Alonso in F1 race

BARCELONA, SPAIN—LEWIS HAMILTON has one Formula One record. If the McLaren rookie can manage to win his first Grand Prix, he just might claim the most important one of all.

Hamilton was runner-up to Felipe Massa of Ferrari for the second consecutive race at the Spanish Grand Prix on Sunday, moving the 22-year-old Englishman past two-time defending world champion Fernando Alonso to the top of F1's championship standings.

But no driver has ever won the championship in his debut season, or without winning a race.

To that end, Hamilton's quest for a maiden F1 win will lead him to the same circuit where he triumphed on the GP2 circuit last year—in Monaco, on May 27.

"Monaco has always been a very strong race for me, and I was saying to Felipe, one day we'll get him and you never know if it's that one or not," Hamilton said.

"I think we'll be very strong in Monaco so I'm looking forward to it... I'm going to be gunning for a win."

Hamilton, the first rookie to land on the podium in his first four races, passed team founder Bruce McLaren by a month and two days to become the youngest driver to lead the standings.

Hamilton has 30 points, while teammate Alonso, who finished third in Barcelona, has 28. Massa is third with 27 points.

"I keep saying I am living my dream, it is really true," Hamilton said. "I have been working so hard for this and to come into only my fourth GP and come out leading the championship with the top two drivers here is incredible."

Hamilton, the No. 2 at McLaren behind Alonso, has found a likely rival in his Ferrari counterpart Massa.

The 26-year-old Brazilian recovered from a sixth-place at the Australian GP to move ahead of teammate Kimi Raikkonen and become Ferrari's most consistent threat.

"For the second consecutive race weekend, Felipe Massa put in a flawless performance," Ferrari boss Jean Todt said. "Felipe drove impeccably, controlling the situation to bring home a wonderful win."

Massa paid tribute to the former teammate—seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher—who was in pit lane at the Circuit de Catalunya for his victory.

LEWIS Hamilton: Steady rookie AP

"Once again, I would like to thank Michael for the help he has given me all these years," Massa said. "His lessons have been useful."

Teammate Raikkonen, who is fourth in the standings with 22 points, continued to be let down by his F2007 car and retired with an electrical fault after nine laps.

Breakdowns were part of the reason he joined the Italian team after a problematic 2006 with McLaren.

"Honestly, there's little to say except that I'm disappointed," Raikkonen said. "I have lost precious points but there's still 13 races to recover."

Despite enjoying the support of a sell-out record crowd of 140,000, Alonso—who became the first Spaniard to win the Spanish GP last year—is in the thick of the hunt for a third straight title.

"No doubt I'm very disappointed with the race itself," the Spaniard said. "If Kimi hadn't retired, probably I would be out of the podium and, starting second, that was not the aim of the race."

Alonso followed up last year's win here with a victory in Monaco to help pad his lead in the championship. It looks tighter this year but Alonso is ready for all challengers.

"(Lewis) is still the same, still my teammate," Alonso said. "I see him the same way as I see Felipe and Kimi. But he is the one who worries me less because he is my teammate and we are here to help each other."

So far the teammates have helped McLaren to first place in the constructors table with 58 points. Ferrari is second with 49. *AP*

Red Sox shock Orioles

BOSTON—THE BOSTON RED Sox took advantage of a two-out error to complete a six-run ninth-inning rally and stun the Baltimore Orioles 6-5 on Sunday.

Closer Chris Ray muffed a catch while covering first base to allow the Red Sox to come back from a 5-0 deficit.

Ray failed to handle a toss from Orioles' first baseman Kevin Miller on Julio Lugo's grounder, permitting Jason Varitek and Eric Hinske to score the game's tying and winning runs.

Boston put together six runs on three hits, three walks and two errors in the stunning comeback.

"Just how you draw it up," Red Sox manager Terry Francona jokingly told reporters.

The rally began with one out when Orioles catcher Ramon Hernandez dropped a popup by Coco Crisp for an error.

The Orioles then replaced starter Jeremy Guthrie, who had allowed only three hits, with Danys Baez.

Baez lasted only two batters. He gave up a run-scoring double to David Ortiz and a single to Wily Mo Pena.

Ray relieved Baez and walked two consecutive batters. The first walk, to J.D. Drew, loaded the bases. The second, to Kevin Youkilis, scored Ortiz and pulled Boston to within 5-2.

Varitek followed with a two-run double and Hinske was intentionally walked to load the bases.

Baltimore's Brian Roberts threw home to nab Youkilis off Alex Cora's grounder to second for out number two.

But when Lugo grounded between first and second, Ray could not handle the throw from Millar, giving the Red Sox the game.

"I got a late jump off the mound and I kind of lost the ball a little bit on the throw. I just didn't pick it up in time," Ray told reporters.

Lugo said he just wanted to reach first any way he could.

"You're always thinking in your backyard, you know ... bases loaded, last inning ... hitting a grand slam," he told reporters.

"I just want to get a hit," he added.

Boston starter Josh Beckett, who has won seven straight, left the game in the fourth with what was described as an irritation to his right middle finger. *Reuters*

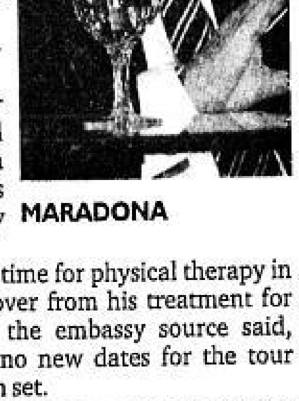
YANKEES' Hideki Matsui backs away from an inside pitch from Mariners' Chris Reitsma. Seattle won, 2-1. AP

Recovering Maradona postpones Asian tour

BANGKOK—ARGENTINE FOOTBALL Legend Diego Maradona will postpone his Asian tour to give him time to recover from his recent stint in a rehabilitation clinic, an Argentine embassy official said Monday.

Maradona, 46, was due to head to Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore and Thailand next week, but the tour has been postponed until late June after his treatment for alcohol abuse, the official said.

The star was released from a Buenos Aires clinic on May 6.


MARADONA

"He needs time for physical therapy in order to recover from his treatment for alcoholism," the embassy source said, adding that no new dates for the tour have yet been set.

Maradona had planned to spend five days in Thailand, where he was due to take part in an football exhibition.

Regarded as one of the greatest figures in world football, Maradona played for Barcelona and Napoli and captained his country to victory in the 1986 World Cup, but he has struggled with cocaine and alcohol abuse for years.

He was hospitalized earlier in April for hepatitis linked to heavy drinking. *AFP*

Jazz in sync, move closer toward finals

SAN FRANCISCO—CARLOS Boozer powered the Utah Jazz to a 115-101 road victory over the Golden State Warriors on Sunday, the Game Four win putting the visitors on the brink of a Western Conference finals berth.

Boozer scored 34 points and added 12 rebounds to put the Jazz in a position to wrap up the best-of-seven series with a win at Salt Lake City on Tuesday.

Derek Fisher added 21 points, 14 of them in the fourth quarter, and Deron Williams contributed 20 points and 13 assists to the win.

"We couldn't handle Boozer," Golden State coach Don Nelson told reporters. "I don't think people realize, he is a major, major star. Their strength is our weakness. They're strong and big and go inside, and we're not." Utah, which trailed by three points after three quarters, used a 7-1 fourth-quarter run to take control of the game as Fisher took over the scoring.

The Jazz guard had 14 points in the fourth quarter, getting 10 points in the final 5:55 to help the Jazz overcome an 87-86 Golden State lead.

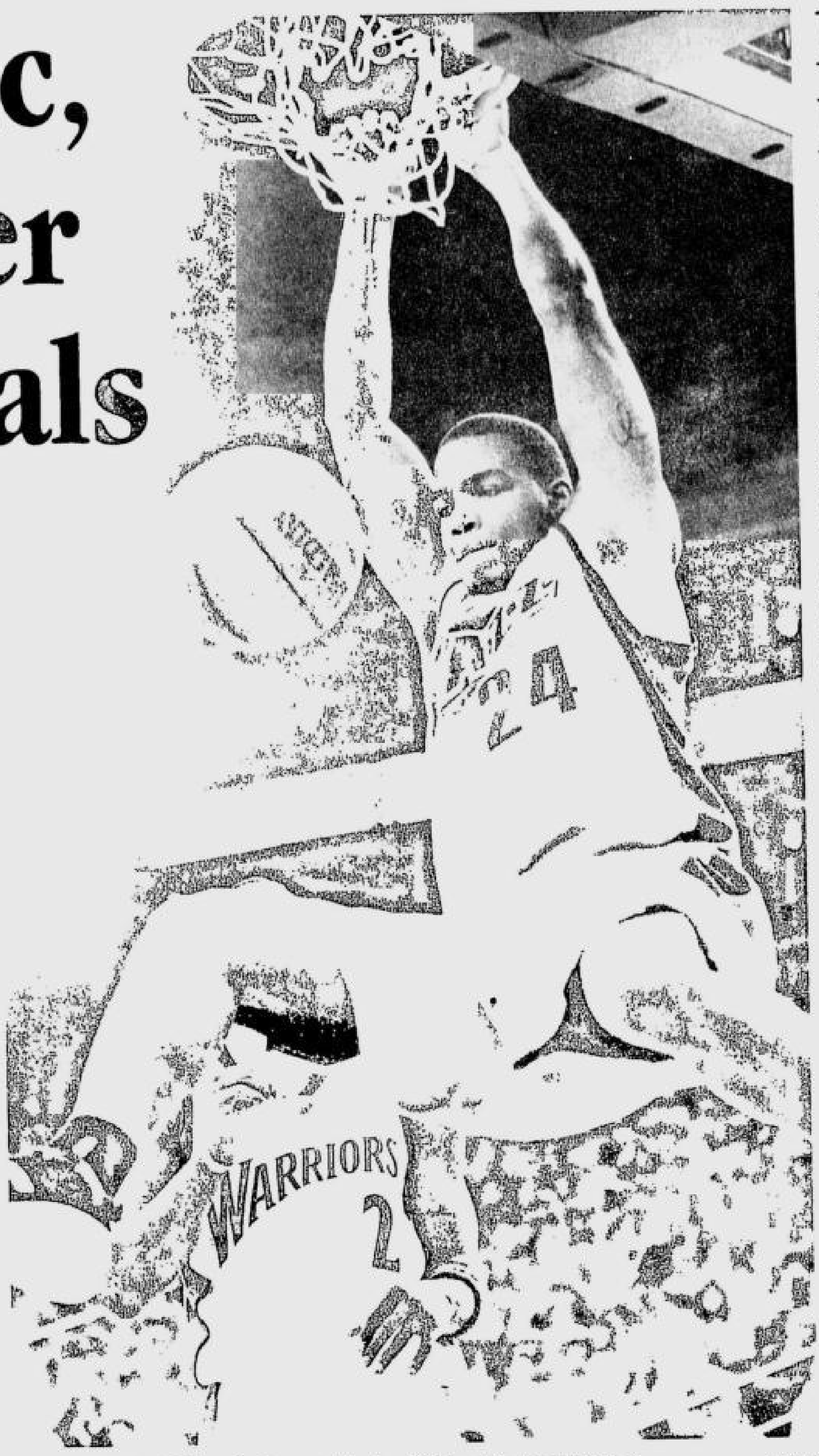
His three-pointer touched off the 7-1 run and by the time it ended with a Fisher jumper at 4:07, Utah led 93-88.

Another three-pointer by Fisher at 2:16 started a 6-0 run that raised the Utah lead to 103-93.

"He knows what it takes to win," Jazz forward Paul Millsap told reporters.

Stephen Jackson and Al Harrington each had 24 points for the Warriors, but sparkplug Baron Davis scored just 15.

"We attacked the basket," Davis told reporters. "But I think we kind of got discouraged once we didn't get calls, and we can't play like that. We can't look to the refs and complain. I thought that took our aggression away." *Reuters*



THE JAZZ'S Paul Millsap dunks over Warriors' Mickael Pietrus in Game 4. REUTERS

Bulls down Pistons, lift sagging bid

CHICAGO—THE CHICAGO BULLS AVOIDED their first playoff sweep in 20 years Sunday with a 102-87 win over Detroit that prolonged their National Basketball Association Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Ben Wallace, Kirk Hinrich and Ben Gordon had their best games, while Luol Deng had 25 points and 13 rebounds for the Bulls, who again got off to a good start and this time avoided the collapse that cost them game three and put them one defeat from elimination.

"I don't care who it is, we are a better team than getting swept in a series four games straight," Wallace said of almost being swept by his former team. "We need to still come out and fight." Chicago has not been swept in any NBA series since 1987 and in a best-of-seven series since 1981, both at the hands of Boston.

The Bulls easily could have succumbed to the most demoralizing statistic in sports: NBA teams facing a 3-0 deficit are 0-for-81 all-time.

Instead, Chicago played by far its best all-around game of the series, shooting 49 percent from the field and dominating the backboards 51-33.

"This win means we are still alive and we live for another day," Hinrich said. "Right now we have to take it one game at a time, we know we will have to play our best game of the year in game five." Leading the way was Wallace, who had been the emotional leader of the Pistons for six years before joining the Bulls this season.

He was criticized for his poor play against his former team in this series but responded with 11 points and 17 rebounds.

Wallace also had a pair of blocks and foiled the "Bang-a-Ben" strategy of purposely fouling him used late by the Pistons, sinking 3-of-4 free throws.

Hinrich had a solid game with 19 points and 10 assists. The top seeds head home for game five on Wednesday. AFP

DHL inks pact with NBA

BEIJING—EXPRESS MAIL GIant DHL Monday signed an agreement with the US-based National Basketball Association to market its products at NBA activities in China and the Asian region.

As part of the new agreement, DHL will participate in NBA initiatives across various platforms, including television, digital media and events throughout China and Asia, NBA China said in a statement.

DHL would also participate in the NBA China Games 2007, which includes games in October in Shanghai and Macau between the Cleveland Cavaliers, the Orlando Magic and the Chinese National Team, the statement said. *AFP*

Nadal keeps Rome Masters supremacy

RAFAEL Nadal: Unbeatable in clay. AP

ROME—A DAY AFTER ESTABlishing a record for most wins on one surface, Rafael Nadal became the only player to win the Rome Masters three consecutive times.

It was a week filled with emotions for the second-ranked Spaniard, who beat Fernando Gonzalez of Chile, 6-2, 6-2, Sunday.

"I think I'm in the best moment of my career, playing better than ever, so (I'm) very happy for that," the second-ranked Nadal said.

It was Nadal's fourth ATP title of the year. He also won in Indian Wells, California; Monte Carlo, Monaco; and Barcelona, Spain. He has a 21-3 career record in finals.

But before reaching the Rome final, the 20-year-old Nadal had to overcome a dizzy spell and an apparent stomach problem that forced him to go the hospital. He also spent nearly four hours on the court against Nikolay Davydenko in the semifinals.

Nadal has not lost on clay since he was defeated by Igor Andreev in the quarterfinals in Valencia, Spain, in April 2005.

Sunday's victory extended Nadal's winning streak on clay to 77 matches. By reaching the final, the Spaniard had already broken John McEnroe's record for most victories on one surface.

"This guy is unbelievable on this surface," McEnroe said of Nadal shortly before the final. "He's like the (Bjorn) Borg of this era."

Going into Sunday's final, the sixth-raned Gonzalez held a 3-1 edge in career meetings with Nadal, including a win in the Australian Open quarterfinals in January.

But Nadal took control of the match with a break in the opening game and never relinquished his grip. Down one set and two breaks, Gonzalez managed to get one break back, but Nadal kept the lead and finished off with a forehand winner.

"To win here for a third time is like a dream," Nadal said. "I've had the good fortune of coming here for three years and winning for three years ... It's an incredible sensation."

By the end of the match, Gonzalez had 31 unforced errors—including 18 with what is usually is more effective shot, a powerful forehand. Nadal, who combined his solid ground strokes with uncharacteristic approaches to the net, had 14. *AP*

Hewitt keen on Roche as new coach

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIA NUMBER ONE LLEYton Hewitt would be interested in hiring Tony Roche following the coach's sudden split from Roger Federer, his manager said in Monday.

Hewitt, who has struggled with form and a back injury since winning the Las Vegas Open in March, has been without a full-time coach since Roger Rasheed quit the job shortly before the Australian Open in January.

His compatriot Roche had coached world number one Federer on a part-time basis from 2005, but the pair parted ways on Saturday, just two weeks before the French Open.

Australian newspapers have speculated that Roche may link up with Hewitt.

"I think he does need that little bit of extra support with him, I know he's getting frustrated at the moment because he's doing a lot of work and he's not getting the results," Drysdale told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio.

"There's been no contact at the moment no, I'll be having a talk to Lleyton over the next couple of nights and seeing whether he would like me to chase up Tony and see what's going on and then we'll talk to Tony and just go from there."

Hewitt was former world No. 1 . *Reuters*

Serbian teener rules German Open

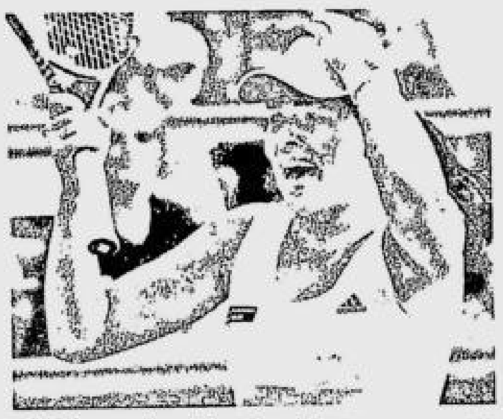
BERLIN—SERBIAN TEENAGER ANA Ivanovic fought back from a set down to win the first title of her career on clay on Sunday, defeating Russian third seed Svetlana Kuznetsova, 3-6, 6-4, 7-6, in a thrilling final at the German Open.

The tall 19-year-old from Belgrade, seeded 12 here, started nervously in sunny conditions at the Steffi Graf Stadium, allowing the powerful world number four to race into a 3-0 lead inside 10 minutes.

After losing the first set, Ivanovic battled back into contention with some robust hitting of her own and held her nerve to take the decisive tiebreak 7-4 when Kuznetsova hit a forehand long.

With the French Open looming at the end of this month, Ivanovic said the victory in Berlin had improved her chances of success at the only grand slam played on clay.

"It's obviously very exciting," Ivanovic said at a news conference. "Maybe I have more expectations now but I also don't want to put too much pressure on myself." Ivanovic, who may break into the top 10 for the first time when the updated rankings are published on Monday, said she had been suffering from a troublesome ankle during Sunday's match but was still likely to play at this week's Rome event.



ANA Ivanovic celebrates victory. AFP

"I took some painkillers but they didn't kick in until the end of the third set so I tried to hit winners earlier in the rallies," she said. "It's probably nothing too dangerous." Kuznetsova was playing her second match of the day, having earlier beaten world number one Justine Henin, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 ,in their interrupted semifinal which began on Saturday.

The former US Open champion had beaten the Belgian only once in 15 previous meetings and lost to her in last year's French Open final.

Kuznetsova said at a news conference her victories this week over Henin and defending German Open champion Nadia Petrova had boosted her confidence ahead of Roland Garros, which begins in Paris on May 27.

"I was disappointed to lose the final today of course but I have been winning against top players and I am very happy about that," she said. "I'm on the right way." Henin, who has won three of her five grand slams in the French capital, said earlier it had been a very demanding week in Berlin, with many interruptions for rain and poor light, blustery conditions and slippery courts.

"It was very dangerous actually and everyone was scared they were going to get injured," she said, adding that she would be taking two weeks off to rest and train.

"I had a good preparation here and a lot of matches on the clay and that's good for the French Open," she said. *Reuters*

Overheating engine fails to stop Gordon

ATLANTA—JEFF GORDON SURVIVED AN overheating engine to win his third Nascar race of the year at Darlington, South Carolina, on Sunday.

Points leader Gordon held off a late charge by Denny Hamlin to take the checkered flag. It was his third win in four races.

"I can't believe that thing lasted," Gordon told reporters after his 78th Nascar career victory and seventh win at the historic Darlington Raceway.

"There's no way that thing should have ever made it," Gordon said of his engine, which spewed steam for the second half of the race.

Gordon got away from the field after a restart with 13 laps remaining.

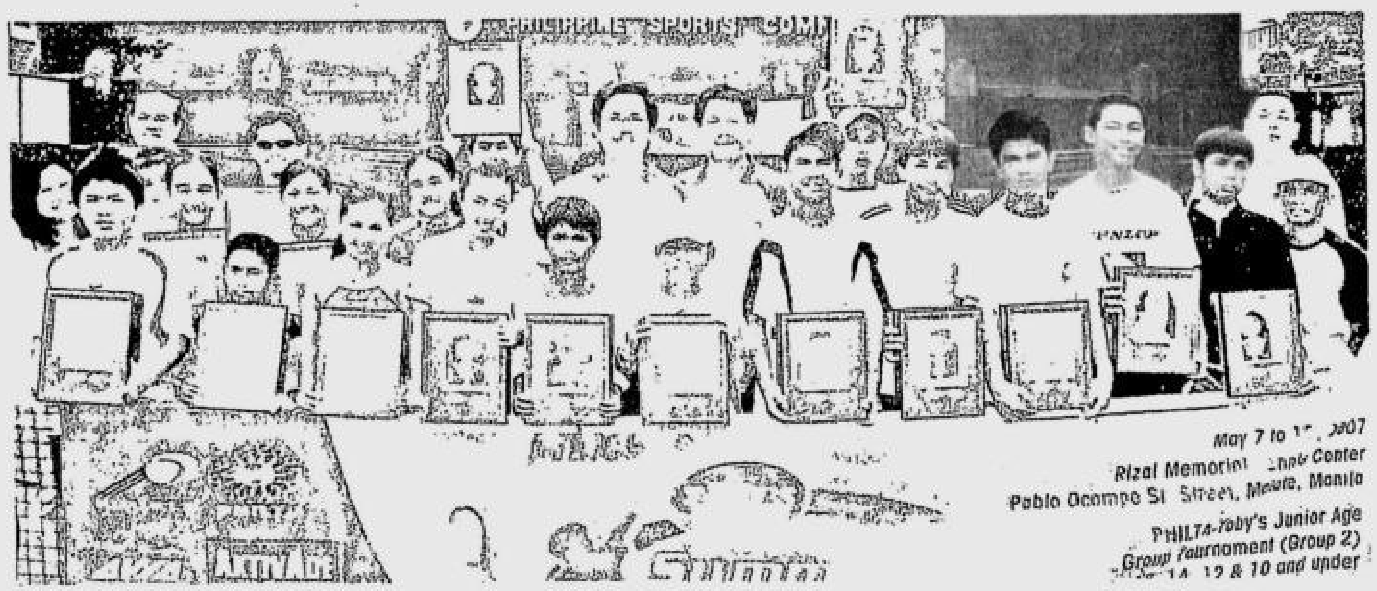
Hamlin tried to chase down the fellow Chevrolet driver, making up two seconds of a three-second deficit, but he could not overtake Gordon.

Jimmie Johnson was third in another Chevrolet with Ryan Newman taking fourth in a Dodge.

Former Formula One driver Juan Pablo Montoya was 23rd in a Dodge. Rain forced postponement of the race on Saturday. *Reuters*

VOLLEY CHAMP: Tyra Turner bumps a ball Sunday at the AVP Glendale Open in Arizona. May-Treanor/Walsh beat Turner/Wacholder, 18-21, 21-17, 15-9, for the title. AFP

Barte, Saraza, Santiago big tennis victors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TOP SEEDS RALF KEVIN BARTE AND KIM IVOR SARAZA AND A 13-YEAR-OLD from Olongapo City emerged as the biggest winners in the 6th annual Toby's Philta Age-Group Championships that ended last Sunday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The 18-year-old Barte took the first and only game of the match in bagging the boys' 18-and-under title over third seed El Santo Santos, who retired due to an eye injury.

Saraza was broken only once in trouncing sixth seed Pemrick Alina, 6-2, 6-4, to rule the boy's 16-under class of the event held in cooperation with the Philippine Tennis Association and the Futures Foundation.

Barte's serve grazed Santos' right eye in the very first game, leaving him writhing in pain. After ascertaining that Santos could not resume play, the umpire awarded the match to Barte.

"He was in pain and I'm sorry the championship match had to end that way," said Barte from Davao City.

Tim Polero, John Maveric Ribaya, Vince Salas, Mark Ramos and Jeremiah Macias II also dominated their respective divisions.

The top-seeded Polero survived younger brother Kim in three sets, 7-6, 1-6, 6-4, to cop the boy's 14-under crown; second-ranked Ribaya foiled No. 1 Jacob Lagman, 6-4, 6-2, in the boy's 12-under final; top seed Salas overcame No. 3 Vince Mark Tabo Tabo, 7-5, 0-6, 6-4, to win the unisex 10-under title; Ramos nipped Patrick Mangasing, 8-1, for the boy's 12-under championship, and Macias downed John Paolo Vestidas, 8-5, to top the boy's 16-under non-ranking unisex class.

Maria Regina Santiago, a 13-year-old campaigner from Olongapo City, captured the girls' 18-under and 16-under division to share the limelight with Barte and Saraza.

Santiago, an incoming third year high school student at St. Joseph College, bested Jasmine Ho, 6-3, 6-3, to rule the girl's 18-under. She returned to overpower sixth seed Mary Grace Rivero, 6-1, 6-2, for the girl's 16-under crown.

The other winners in girls' play were Louise Alexandra Lopez of Wood Rose School and Erica Lagura, a 10-year-old sensation from Batac, Ilocos Norte.

The 13-year-old Lopez beat Macy Gonzales, 7-5, 6-0, and ruled the 14-under division while Lagura stunned fifth seed Crizztabelle Paulino, 6-2, 6-2, for the 12-under plum.

Top Toby's Sports officials led by president and GM Jose Claudio Jr. and operations manager Toby Claudio and event organizer Jean Agra attended the closing rites. -

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

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RP tourism on fastest rise in a decade

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'Next big thing' for investors

By Daxim L. Lucas

(First of 3 parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

COMPANIES AND BUSINESS men who haven't latched on to the call center and business process outsourcing (BPO) trend by now should forget it, if they're looking to make a killing.

From all indications, "the next big thing" for Philippine business is the tourism industry, which has virtually exploded onto the scene in recent years.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the biggest conglomerates in

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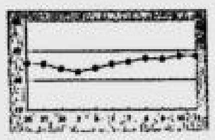

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BPI launches another first to complete its Family of Index Funds

Known for pioneering visionary products, BPI Asset Management, the group under the Bank of the Philippine Islands handling trust and investment management services, launched the first dollar denominated bond index fund in the country in a press briefing last April 25, 2007. The Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund or PDBF is the newest addition to the BPI Investment Funds and complements BPI's growing family of index funds.

With the macroeconomic fundamentals of the country still strong with expectations of GDP growth surpassing the average growth for the past years, and the fiscal deficit and ratio of government debt to GDP continuing its downward path, prices of Philippine assets including ROPs are expected to hold its ground for 2007. Compared to other emerging bond markets included in the JPMorgan Chase Emerging Bond Index, the Philippines ranked 3rd best performing as of end 2006 and occupied the top spot when compared to its Asian peers. There is great opportunity, therefore, to earn superior returns in funds investing in dollar-denominated Philippine debt securities. Owing to this, the availability of BPI's new fund came in an opportune timing for an investor to take advantage of the widening ROP spreads and achieve the widest diversification in Philippine bonds.

Investing with the Index Fund Pioneer

More than the potential to earn higher income, investors may want to test the waters of index investing through PDBF. Index funds are still hardly a household concept in the Philippines. As such, investors may find assurance in placing their money only in funds managed by the local expert in index funds.

BPI Asset Management pioneered the index funds in the country back in 2004 when it introduced the Philippine Stock Index Fund or PSIF. The PSIF is a stock mutual fund which attempts to achieve the same returns as the Philippine Stock Exchange Composite Index or PSEi. The PSIF provided small individual investors to ride the growth of the local stock market at a very modest investment amount. Since then, investors have enjoyed double digit returns every year. PSIF finished 2006 with 42.29% absolute return on investment given the very good performance of the local bourse last year which continues to date.

In 2006, BPI Asset Management fortified its pioneering stance in the index funds category with the launch of the ABF Philippines Bond Index Fund (ABF PBIF), the first bond index fund in the country. The ABF PBIF is part of the Asian Bond Fund 2 initiative which established BPI at par with global fund managers having been chosen as the fund manager of the Philippine Single Market fund - the ABF PBIF. The ABF PBIF tracks the iBoxx ABF Philippines Index and invests in peso-denominated Philippine sovereign and quasi-sovereign bonds. For 2006, ABF PBIF turned in an 18.83% full year return on investment.

With these two funds, BPI Asset Management gained the distinction of being the only financial institution in the country to manage index-tracker funds similar to the global arena's Vanguard Group.

Building the case for index funds

Index funds are designed to eliminate the anxiety of beating the market. They appeal to investors who do not want to be concerned every now and then whether their fund is doing better or worse than the other investments. Since index funds invest in a very diverse selection of securities considered to be a fair representation of the asset class, index fund investors bet on the market in general and see a potential to earn higher returns on the average over a period of time. Index funds are also low-cost funds. Management fees are maintained at very low levels to allow the fund to easily achieve its investment objective.

The First Dollar-denominated Bond index fund launched

Having set the stage for index funds, BPI Asset Management proudly announced the birth of the latest member of its Family of Index Funds. The Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund tracks the JPMorgan Asia Credit Index (JACI) Philippines Total Return.

JACI is an internationally-recognized index launched in December 1999 which provides investors with an aid in the evaluation and observation of investment opportunities in U.S. dollar-denominated bonds issued by Asia sovereigns, quasi-sovereigns, banks and corporates. The JACI contains the majority of all fixed and floating rate bonds issued by Asia-domiciled entities having a nominal outstanding of US$150 Million and more than one year. The JACI Philippines Total Return is a sub-index of the JACI reflecting the liquid and diverse universe of Philippine bonds denominated in U.S. Dollar. Year-on-year, the JACI Philippines Total Return posted an ROI of 14.09% as of May 9, 2007.

The Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund is most suitable for aggressive investors seeking superior capital growth over the long-term. BPI Asset Management has made the minimum investment amount very affordable at USD1,000 to allow more dollar-holders to participate. The Fund is available in any BPI or BPI Family Savings Bank branch nationwide.

ADVT.

To complement BPI's growing Family of Index Funds...

Introducing the Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund

MR. ADELBERT LEGASTO
EVP, BPI Asset Management

talks about the country's
first dollar-denominated bond index fund

On the concept of an Index Fund and an Index...

"Are you familiar with the PSEi or the Philippine Stock Exchange Composite Index? Well, that is an example of an index. It is a group of securities whose collective performance is used as a standard to measure investment performance. There are indices for stocks, there are also indices for bonds.

... An index fund, on the other hand, is a type of investment fund designed to follow the performance of a particular target index. This is achieved by investing in the same securities composing the index. A fund could be a stock or bond index fund depending on the index being tracked. Take note, you invest in an index fund, but you can't invest in an index."

On the advantages of investing in an Index Fund...

"Index Funds are designed to eliminate the anxiety of trying to beat the market. You buy into this particular fund, because you feel that following the general performance of the market, on the average, will give you better returns over a period of time. So you don't have to think every now and then, is my fund doing better or worse than the rest?"

On Index Funds in the Philippines...

"I am proud to say that in the Philippines, we are the only financial institution that has the experience and expertise when it comes to managing an index fund. We not only manage one index fund, but a family of index funds, each of which suits a specific investment objective.

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... Now, we are very proud to add the Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund, the first and only dollar- denominated bond index fund in the country, to our growing Family of Index Funds."

On the Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund...

"The Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund is indeed a rewarding investment for your dollars. It replicates the performance of the JPMorgan Asia Credit Index (JACI) Philippines Total Return, a well-known index for Philippine sovereign and quasi-sovereign bonds denominated in U.S. Dollar.

... It is the best fund if you want to invest in a broad spectrum of Philippine bonds. It is also an affordable investment if you want to enjoy higher income potential and lower management fees."

On Getting Started With Index Fund Investing...

"If you wish to invest in the Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund, you may visit any BPI or BPI Family Savings Bank branch nationwide. You may also call our BPI Trust Marketing Team at tel. nos. 845-5022/5080/5041 or 816-9053/9036 to know more about the fund...

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Note:
(1) The Philippine Dollar Bond Index Fund is one of the BPI Investment Funds. The BPI Investment Funds are collective investment vehicles in which funds of various investors are invested by a professional fund manager in a diversified portfolio of securities based on the Fund's pre-determined investment objective.
(2) Investors may buy or sell their units based on the prevailing net asset value per unit valued at market price daily.
(3) Each fund has its own investment policy and objective to suit clients' investment requirements, horizon and risk preference. A copy of the Declaration of Trust and Plan Rules of each particular fund is available at the principal office of the Trustee.
(4) All funds managed by BPI Asset Management are Trust and/or Investment Management funds which DO NOT carry any guarantee of income or principal, and are NOT covered by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC). Past performance is likewise not a guarantee of future results.

Analysts expect mobile TV to click in Philippine market

By Riza T. Olchondra

ANALYSTS AT THE HP MOBILITY Summit held in Shanghai recently said that with slower-than-expected ramp-up for 3G technology, mobile TV could be the next killer application in the Philippines after text messaging.

They, however, said consumers must be given affordable options to encourage the market to adopt the technology.

Assuming that all mobile phone owners in the country are also regular TV viewers, the Philippine market for mobile TV could easily reach 40 million people.

Paul Shen, CEO of US-based rebroadcaster TVU, and Rex Wong, CEO of content aggregator DAVE TV, said on the sidelines of the summit that mobile TV could provide the "stickiness factor" that would make people stay with one telecom company or broadcaster in an increasingly fickle market.

This is because mobile TV allows viewers to watch their favorite soap operas, variety shows, news programs and sportscasts at their convenience, even while stuck in traffic.

However, they both said that for mobile TV to boom, users must have choices on what platforms and devices to use.

Mobile TV need not be limited to cellular phones, but also to other mobile devices, such as laptops, they added.

Bertrand Bidaud, managing vice-president for carrier operations, strategies and communications research at advisory firm Gartner, expressed a similar view. Gartner, however, said broadcasting via 3G should be avoided because that could affect prices.

"3G is much too expensive. It is more cost-efficient to use radio (waves), so that the service can be cheaper and appealing," he said.

Smart Communications and MediaQuest Holdings are set to launch their mobile TV service later this year using Digital Video Broadcasting-Handheld (DVBH) technology.

Globe Telecom has also developed a mobile TV service called G-TV. As a rule, the subscriber needs a streaming-capable handset to access the service.

Broadcasting companies such as ABS-CBN Gorp. and GV Broadcasting System Inc. have hinted at having similar plans.

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Taxes on financial instruments reviewed

Cuts to boost local capital market

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE SAID IT was considering proposals from the capital market to rationalize taxes on financial instruments, which may include the reduction of the tax on interest income from 20 to 10 percent.

According to Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran, the government now has a leeway to entertain proposals that will involve tax cuts and, therefore, foregone revenues for the state given its improving fiscal condition.

Beltran stressed, though, that the rationalization of taxes would not only mean a reduction in the tax rates that were deemed too high. He said it could also include the imposition of new taxes that would be necessary to ensure a fair tax system.

The Capital Market Development Council (CMDC)—which includes insurance and preneed firms, banks and other financial institutions—has been pushing for the lowering of taxes on financial instruments to help boost the domestic capital market.

The group had originally sought the lifting of the 20-percent tax on covered financial instruments, saying this was disadvantageous to firms issuing such instruments. It had said that the tax made other financial instruments less competitive than long-term bank instruments, such as savings deposits of at least five years which were exempted from the tax.

But Beltran said the group had revised its proposal from an outright lifting of the tax to a mere reduction of the rate to 10 percent. The revised position, however, also called for the expansion of the tax coverage to include financial instruments that were currently exempted.

The 20-percent tax is imposed on the interest income derived from the covered financial instruments.

Beltran said another proposal that the DOF was now considering was the lifting of the tax on repurchase agreements. He said taxing repurchase agreements involving a security could mean double taxation, noting that a tax is already imposed on the first purchase agreement of that same security.

A repurchase agreement is an arrangement whereby one party acquires securities with the understanding that the seller would buy them back, usually within a short period of time.

Also, the DOF is considering another proposal of the group that involves the lifting of the premium tax on reinsurance.

Similar to the case of repurchase agreements, taxing reinsurance could also be a case of double taxation because the premium tax was already paid upon the purchase of the original insurance, Beltran said.

The CMDC is also pushing for the reduction of the premium tax rate on insurance from 5 to 2 percent, saying taxes on insurance products make these essential instruments costly and therefore unattractive for Filipinos.

The CMDC proposals were presented to finance officials last Friday.

Beltran said that should any of the proposals be approved by the DOF and eventually legislated into law, the implementation would be prospective. Instruments that have already been issued prior to approval, would therefore continue to carry the same tax rates.

ALI expands BPO space inventory

DEVELOPER AYALA LAND INC. SAID IT would significantly speed up its development of office spaces for business processing outsourcing firms in the next three years.

Marivic Anonuevo, head of the firm's corporate business group, said ALI's goal was to construct 500,000 sqm. of BPO spaces by 2010.

ALI's current inventory was placed at 52,000 sqm., located mostly in Makati, Taguig and Laguna.

The company is set to undertake other BPO-friendly developments in Quezon City, Manila, Alabang, Cebu, and Davao. In 36 months, it hopes to grow its current BPO office inventory to 10 times its present level. It is also currently exploring options in other key cities in the country.

Ma. Carmela Ignacio, senior division manager of ALI's corporate business division, said the strong demand for Ayala Land office projects was coming mostly from the leading BPO players and other top multinational corporations who want to set up backroom operations in the country.

ALI's ambitious targets are in keeping with the projected growth of the global BPO industry. From the 2005 level of $30 billion, the BPO industry is expected to hit $110 billion in gross revenue by 2010.

Next to India, the Philippines is a favored offshore location for numerous back office operations from the US and Europe. Foreign companies prefer Filipino BPO workers because most of them speak English and are familiar with western culture. "Consolidated BPO workforce demand in the Philippines is expected to increase by an average of 50 percent annually in the next five years," noted Ignacio.

In anticipation of the BPO-driven growth in the office sector, Ayala Land will construct BPO communities in key Philippine locations, drawing from its experience in Makati and in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. In both areas, the company partnered with top BPO companies such as People Support, Convergys and InfoNXX.

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RP exports to Japan up 14.3%

MERCHANDISE EXPORTS TO JAPAN WENT up 14.3 percent to $1.36 billion as of end-February even as Tokyo said it would focus on dealing with Asean countries as a group toward economic integration in the region.

Preliminary figures from the Japan External Trade Organization show that for the first two months, shipments from the Philippines accounted for 1.4 percent of Japan's total imports of some $99 billion.

With two-way trade reaching $2.49 billion, Japan enjoyed a surplus of $109.9 million.

In 2006, Philippine exports to Japan grew 2.5 percent to $7.96 billion, having maintained a 1.4-percent share of Japan's exports, which reached $579.29 billion.

Last year, two-way trade of goods rang up $16.98 billion, with Japan chalking up a surplus of $1.05 billion.

Tokyo and Manila had signed last year an economic partnership agreement, but this awaits action from the Senate.

Osamu Watanabe, Jetro chair and chief executive, said in a special report issued last February that efforts toward economic integration was being done on a regional basis in the absence of positive developments on multilateral agreements in the World Trade Organization. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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As a bond-deposit hybrid, LTNCDs are high-yielding instruments that are negotiable. Further, LTNCDs are covered by PDIC insurance up to P250,000 per depositor. An investor can subscribe to an LTNCD for as low as P100,000. LTNCDs were especially meant to mobilize savings and encourage long-term investment for individual investors as a withholding tax-exempt certificate if held to maturity.

3. Who can purchase the LTNCDs?
The LTNCDs cater primarily to individuals and corporations in search of a superior investment alternative which will help diversify their portfolios. The LTNCDs will also be available for purchase by financial and other institutional investors.

4. Where and when can an investor purchase LTNCDs?
The LTNCDs will be sold to the public during the public offer period through the selling agents–BPI Capital Corporation and Standard Chartered Bank.

5. How does an investor participate in the Public Offer?
Investors may subscribe for LTNCDs from any of the selling agents, subject to account opening and Know-Your- Customer procedures of each selling agent. Only duly executed applications to purchase accompanied by check payments or appropriate debit instructions covering the entire issue price applied for will be accepted by the Arranger and the Selling Agents. The Bank, however, reserves the right to accept, reject, scale down or reallocate any application to purchase. Investors will be required to open a peso deposit account or designate an existing peso account (subsequent to the execution of special power of attorney) where interest payment and redemption of the LTNCDs will be credited. For corporations, copies of the board resolutions indicating authorized signatories and specimen signatures shall be required.

6. What is an investor's proof of ownership?
No certificate will be issued to CD Holders although registry confirmations, confirming the registration of LTNCDs in the name of each investor, will be sent by the registrar to the address indicated by each investor on his application to purchase. The best evidence of ownership will be the registry book maintained by the third party registrar.

7. Can an investor still purchase LTNCDs after the Public Offering?
After the public offer, an investor can buy LTNCDs from the secondary market through Standard Chartered Bank as the Market Maker, or any other market maker that may be appointed by the Bank, at prevailing market prices.

8. What are the risks involved in investing in LTNCDs?
Yield on the LTNCDs is assured if the investor holds to maturity. However, if an investor opts to sell the LTNCDs in the secondary market prior to maturity, then the LTNCDs will be subject to a price risk depending on the prevailing market rate at the time the LTNCDs are resold in the secondary market. Further, withholding taxes and other fees may apply.

9. Can the LTNCDs be pre-terminated?
LTNCDs cannot be terminated by the holder thereof before maturity date, unless there occurs an event described under "Events of Default". CD Holders may, however, assign or transfer the LTNCDs (subject to certain selling restrictions) and such transfer or assignment shall not be considered a pre-termination. Transfer of a CD Holder's LTNCD may only be done through a Market Maker. LTNCDs may, however, be pre-terminated by the Bank, upon prior notice to the holder on record.

10. Registry Fees Payable by CD Holders
a) Account Opening and Maintenance Fees
Account Opening Fee
₱200.00 shall be payable by each CD Holder for each securities account opened in the Registry Book on Issue Date and for each new CD Holder in the secondary market.
Maintenance Fee*
3 basis points (0.03%) per annum based on face value of the CD to be deducted from gross interest on the interest payment dates.
* *In the event of a transfer in between interest payment dates, the Maintenance Fee corresponding to the holding period of the transferor shall be deducted from the proceeds of the transfer. In as much as the purchase price of the transferee was reduced accordingly, the transferee as of interest payment date shall pay for the Maintenance Fee for the entire three-month period.*
b) Fees on Transactions in the Secondary Market
Transfer Fee
₱200.00 shall be payable by the transferor for each transfer (to the CD Holders' own or to another account).
c) Other Fees
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PhilWeb in the black, posts ₱116-M net profit for 2006

PHILWEB CORP., THE COUNTRY'S first listed Internet company, is back in the black with a net income of P116 million for 2006, fueled by strong revenues from its core gaming operations.

PhilWeb president Dennis O. Valdes said the strategic redirection executed by management three years ago, refocusing the company on gaming, was finally bearing fruit. PhilWeb is a technology enabler of the state-owned Pagcor and is the country's biggest technology-driven gaming provider.

He said the Internet Casino business made the best showing, with total bet volume growing 60 percent to P17.3 billion last year from P10.8 billion in 2005. The Internet Sports Betting business also showed impressive growth. PhilWeb's Basketball Jackpot revenue went up 2.5 times year-on-year to P26 million from P8 million. Tracked on a bet-volume basis, 2006 wagers on Basketball Jackpot came to P267 million, a 33-percent growth from P201 million in 2005.

Meanwhile, Premyo Sa Resibo (PSR), PhilWeb's first text-based game launched in June 2006, continued to generate large text volumes as its popularity grew and has started showing its effectivity in tracking tax evasion and increasing tax revenue.

The program, a cooperative effort among the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), the Department of Finance (DOF), Pagcor and PhilWeb, encourages consumers to ask for official receipts by offering a P1 million prize a week for receipt data submitted through text. Valdes said that PhilWeb's investment in PSR solidified its role as a key supporter of the government's revenue-increasing efforts.

PhilWeb is 26-percent owned by ePLDT, the information and communications technology arm of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. ePLDT has been working with PhilWeb on several key projects, including the launch of a peso-based, ATM-enabled electronic wallet or "e-Pitaka",

PHILWEB/ B5

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Quotation as of May 15, 2007

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,100,000	1,050,000
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,300,000	1,050,000
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	560,000	480,000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB "B"	-	50,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	330,000	280,000
CANLUBANG	470,000	430,000
CANYON WOODS	100,000	70,000
CAPITOL HILLS	40,000	-
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	-	1,750,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	120,000	100,000
CLUB FILIPINO	100,000	80,000
EAGLERIDGE "B"	250,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "C"	350,000	-
FOREST HILLS "A"	85,000	60,000
LUISITA GOLF "A"	350,000	270,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	200,000	180,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	230,000	180,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	-	17,000,000
MANILA GOLF (IND)	-	16,000,000
MANILA POLO	Please Call	Please Call
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	300,000	-
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	700,000	630,000
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200,000	150,000
MIMOSA (IND)	200,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "A"	170,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	180,000	150,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	340,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	350,000	-
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	145,000	125,000
ROCKWELL CLUB	280,000	220,000
SPA & LODGE	Please Call	500,000
STA. ELENA "A"	-	1,500,000
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	300,000	270,000
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	700,000	650,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	670,000	620,000
THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB "A"	380,000	330,000
VALLE VERDE (IND)	100,000	-
VALLEY GOLF	Please Call	200,000
WACK-WACK GOLF CLUB	-	8,200,000

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SHARES AVAILABLE

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,150,000/Pls. Call*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*
Baguio Country Club	600,000	550,000
Camp John Hay	330,000	280,000
Canlubang Golf	470,000	420,000
Canyon Woods	100,000	-
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	-
City Sports Cebu	-	360,000
Club Filipino	90,000	Pls. Call
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/Pls. Call**	140,000/200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	150,000*	80,000/130,000*
Evercrest	85,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/170,000*	120,000*
Luisita Golf B	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	-
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	18,000,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	3,050,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	330,000/Pls. Call*	250,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	200,000/250,000*	Pls. Call
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	-
Mimosa C1/C2*/C3**	220,000	180,000
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**	-
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	230,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/170,000*	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	1,500,000
Subic Golf	190,000	-
Summit Point A	280,000	-
The Palms Country Club	350,000	Pls. Call
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	320,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	650,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	230,000	200,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	9,000,000	8,200,000

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Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 29, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice of Meeting and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 30, 2006
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2006
5. Approval of the 2006 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Amendment of the Articles of Incorporation to withhold the stockholders' pre-emptive right to subscribe to any new or additional shares of the Bank
7. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 31, 2006 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 30, 2007 will be entitled to notice of, and vote at, this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 24, 2007. Any proxies so received will be validated by the Bank's Corporate Secretary on May 25, 2007, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, February 16, 2007

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

Chemrez profit up 272%

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

COCO-BIODIESEL producer Chemrez Technologies Inc. reported a 272-percent surge in net income in the first quarter to P73.2 million from P19.7 million in the same period last year, its unaudited financial statement filed with the Philippine Stock Exchange showed.

Chemrez chief finance office Francis Caluag said the first-quarter earnings were derived mainly from the sale of the firm's traditional resins and oleochemical products.

He noted that profits for the first quarter represented 78 percent of the 2006 full-year net income of P94 million. Income is expected to rise with the additional boost from the sale of coco-biodiesel, which went full steam only this month.

Under the Biofuels Act, which took effect in February, all diesel-fed vehicles should use at least a one-percent biodiesel blend within three months of the law's effectivity. Gasoline, on the other hand, should have at least a 5-percent ethanol blend within two years of the law's effectivity.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 11, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12	24,800
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	65	67	65	66.5	1,181,600
65.5	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	59.5	61	59.5	60.5	1,485,100
935	630	China Banking Corp.	900	910	900	910	2,100
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	400
119	80	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	102	104	102	104	249,170
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.53	1,570,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	61.5	61.5	61	61.5	2,565,100
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	46	46.5	46	46	94,400
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	64	64	64	64	2,000
72	40	Philippine Bank of Communications	51	51	51	51	6,500
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	28.5	29.5	28	29	4,168,300
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	85	86	85	86	75,300
65.77	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	62	62.5	61.5	62	989,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.6	317,000
0.8	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	1,000,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,000
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.4	6,273,000
2.4	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.38	2.38	2.3	2.3	625,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	590	590	585	585	3,220
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,130.00	2,130.00	2,130.00	2,130.00	200
1.94	1.02	Vantage Corp	1.86	1.88	1.84	1.88	4,718,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
0.37	0.16	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	300,000
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	59	59	58.5	58.5	799,600
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	76.5	76.5	75.5	75.5	765,900
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	12	3,524,900
81	13	Manila Electric Co. "A"	79	80	78.5	79.5	221,000
82	20.25	Manila Electric Co. "B"	79	80	79	80	1,060,300
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	13,967,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	6,877,000
2.2	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.1	2.14	2.08	2.14	21,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.42	1.46	1.42	1.44	1,838,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	173,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	35,000
3.4	1.24	CADP Group Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	4,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	26	26	8,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	53	53.5	53	53.5	203,400
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	46,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	3,040,000
70.5	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	66.5	70.5	66.5	70.5	483,800
83	68	San Miguel Corp. "B"	78.5	81	78	81	289,700
0.51	0.19	Swift Foods Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
4.3	2	Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4	4	4	4	26,000
23.75	15.75	Universal Robina Corp.	16.25	16.25	16	16	4,747,200
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.17	1.07	EEI Corp.	4.75	4.95	4.75	4.95	4,268,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	212,000
7.5	2.04	Philippine National Const. Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	13,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.84	1.78	1.84	2,254,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	4,177,000
1.1	0.45	Interphil Laboratories Inc. "A"	0.9	0.95	0.9	0.95	220,000
1.2	0.9	Interphil Laboratories Inc. "B"	0.9	0.98	0.9	0.98	200,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	0.06	Picop Resources Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.31	24,090,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	17,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	4,300,000
0.78	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.64	0.78	0.64	0.76	199,050,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	20,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	684,400,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	71,500,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.8	8.9	8.8	8.8	6,799,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	20,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.3	892,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	100,000
2.26	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.16	2.18	2.12	2.18	5,864,000
680	327.5	Ayala Corp.	595	600	590	600	219,620
14	7.92	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.75	14	13.75	13.75	168,700
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.55	4.6	92,000
4.45	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.7	3.85	8,785,000
8.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.8	8.1	8.8	5,184,000
1.3	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. "A"	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	15,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	600,000
0.42	0.13	Forum Pacific Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	90,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	10,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	1,347,100
0.43	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	80,000
12.5	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.5	11	11.5	382,800
4.4	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.35	5,562,000
5.4	1.16	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.6	3.6	116,000
0.48	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	1,640,000
1.7	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	6,000
407.5	205	SM Investments Corp.	375	380	375	377.5	268,500
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	6,000
0.51	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.38	0.41	0.37	0.4	120,380,000
0.41	0.05	Unioil Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	2,790,000
1.3	0.78	Vivant Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	7,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
0.55	0.15	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	100,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.42	1.5	1.42	1.46	3,031,000
18.75	10.25	Ayala Land Inc.	17.5	18.25	17.5	18	13,410,200
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.36	1.4	1.34	1.4	18,983,000
3.1	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	2.5	2.65	2.5	2.6	1,750,000
4.5	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	37,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	15,000
0.54	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	400,000
0.54	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	8,710,000
0.31	0.14	EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.205	0.215	0.205	0.21	280,000
3.1	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.75	2.75	1,171,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.77	0.78	11,780,000
0.175	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.15	0.175	0.145	0.17	74,000,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	1,120,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.72	48,282,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. "A"	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	15,000,000
1.8	0.72	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	105,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.41	0.42	14,880,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.72	1,560,000
0.034	0.011	Marsteel Consolidated Inc. "A"	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	7,800,000
0.036	0.012	Marsteel Consolidated Inc. "B"	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	500,000
3.95	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.65	58,488,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.45	4.5	122,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	190,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	18.25	18.25	18	18	1,064,500
6	1.48	SM Development Corp.	5	5.1	4.95	5.1	5,045,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	11.75	12	21,417,000
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.69	0.72	0.69	0.71	1,680,000
0.27	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.205	0.19	0.2	5,320,000
1.74	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.48	1.32	1.44	9,175,000
		MEDIA					
31.5	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31.5	31.5	30.5	31.5	317,100
1.2	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	13,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.66	2,800,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,365.00	1,365.00	1,345.00	1,350.00	54,620
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,555.00	2,555.00	2,540.00	2,550.00	114,550
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	1,714,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	8,310,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.2	8.3	7.8	7.8	865,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9	1,067,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	2,400,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	5,000,000
0.0675	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	3,100,000
0.06	0.025	PhilWeb Com Inc.	0.049	0.049	0.046	0.049	106,000,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.16	2.26	2.08	2.1	1,963,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	500,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	184,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	27	28.5	26.5	28.5	3,056,800
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.92	2	1.92	2	1,200,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	4.05	4.1	4.05	4.1	2,333,000
0.52	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.42	0.52	0.42	0.49	47,870,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.96	0.99	0.96	0.98	1,530,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
4.35	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	3.9	3.95	3.9	3.95	1,136,000
16	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	14	15.25	14	15	3,666,900
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	27	27.5	27	27.5	231,700
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	393,900,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.6	2,053,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.8	619,000
20.5	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	19.5	20	19.5	20	5,116,200
14.75	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	12.5	13	12.5	13	92,200
4	1.62	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	22,000
2.12	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.04	2.12	2.02	2.12	37,946,000
0.42	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	3,110,000
0.47	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	1,510,000
0.037	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	230,300,000
0.039	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.037	0.038	0.037	0.038	270,700,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	315,500,000
5.9	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5.2	5.4	5.1	5.3	13,575,000
32	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28.5	27.5	28.5	1,503,700
0.87	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.78	0.8	0.78	0.79	1,230,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.46	1.52	1.44	1.44	25,414,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	18,020,000
0.017	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	484,200,000
0.019	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	5,000,000
14.81	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	32,900
0.0182	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	275,300,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 12, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.741455	1.000000	47.1920
Japan	Yen	0.006182	0.008337	0.3934
United Kingdom	Pound	1.467784	1.979600	93.4213
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094811	0.127872	6.0345
Switzerland	Franc	0.607850	0.819807	38.6883
Canada	Dollar	0.667436	0.900171	42.4809
Singapore	Dollar	0.488345	0.658631	31.0821
Australia	Dollar	0.616646	0.831670	39.2482
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.966828	2.652661	125.1844
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.197710	0.266652	12.5838
Brunei	Dollar	0.486743	0.656470	30.9801
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000114	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022884	0.030864	1.4565
UAE	Dirham	0.201927	0.272339	12.8522
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.348700	63.6479
Korea	Won	0.000802	0.001082	0.0511
China	Yuan**	0.096373	0.129978	6.1339
Argentina	Peso	0.240928	0.324939	15.3345
Brazil	Real	0.367712	0.495933	23.4041
Denmark	Kroner	0.134163	0.180946	8.5392
India	Rupee	0.018066	0.024366	1.1499
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218075	0.294118	13.8800
Mexico	New Peso	0.068401	0.092253	4.3536
New Zealand	Dollar	0.542753	0.732011	34.5451
Norway	Kroner	0.122368	0.165038	7.7885
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012250	0.016521	0.7797
South Africa	Rand	0.106592	0.143761	6.7844
Sweden	Kroner	0.108294	0.146056	6.8927
Syria	Pound	0.014283	0.019264	0.9091
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.022258	0.030020	1.4167
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000346	0.000466	0.0220

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 10, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian time closing rate as of May 10, 2007

Net foreign stock buying up 73.2% to P33.8B

PSE chief says foreign investors' interest in RP market growing

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

NET FOREIGN BUYING IN THE STOCK MARKET surged 73.2 percent to P33.76 billion in the first four months from P19.49-billion in the same period a year ago, the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) reported yesterday.

Net foreign buying is the difference between the amount of stocks bought by foreign investors and the total value of shares they sold during the period.

Total foreign buying from January to April soared 96.1 percent to P215.16 billion from P109.72 billion a year ago.

Total foreign selling also ballooned to P181.41 billion, up 101 percent from P90.24 billion last year.

PSE president Francis Lim said the increasing amount of net foreign transactions was a clear indication of growing interest in the stock market among foreign fund managers.

"Foreign investors would not entrust more money with our market if they entertain doubts about our prospects," Lim said. "Their increasing presence in our market is a major factor that keeps local stock prices moving up."

In 2003, the PSE recorded P3.8 billion in net foreign selling, but this was reversed the following year with the PSE recording net foreign buying of P17.84 billion, Since then, it had been net foreign buying, reaching P23.53 billion in 2005 and P68.49 billion last year.

Total market capitalization of all listed issues reached P7.74 trillion as of April 30, or 7.9-percent higher than the P7.17-trillion mark at the end of 2006. The market capitalization of listed domestic companies hit P3.8 trillion, or 13.3 percent higher than P3.35 trillion at the end of 2006. Market capitalization is the value of all stocks listed on the PSE at their current market prices.

Total value turnover during the first four months of the year surged by more than two-and-a-half times to P385.3 billion from P153.2 billion a year earlier.

Average daily value turnover from January to April expanded by 154.6 percent to P4.7 billion from P1.85 billion last year.

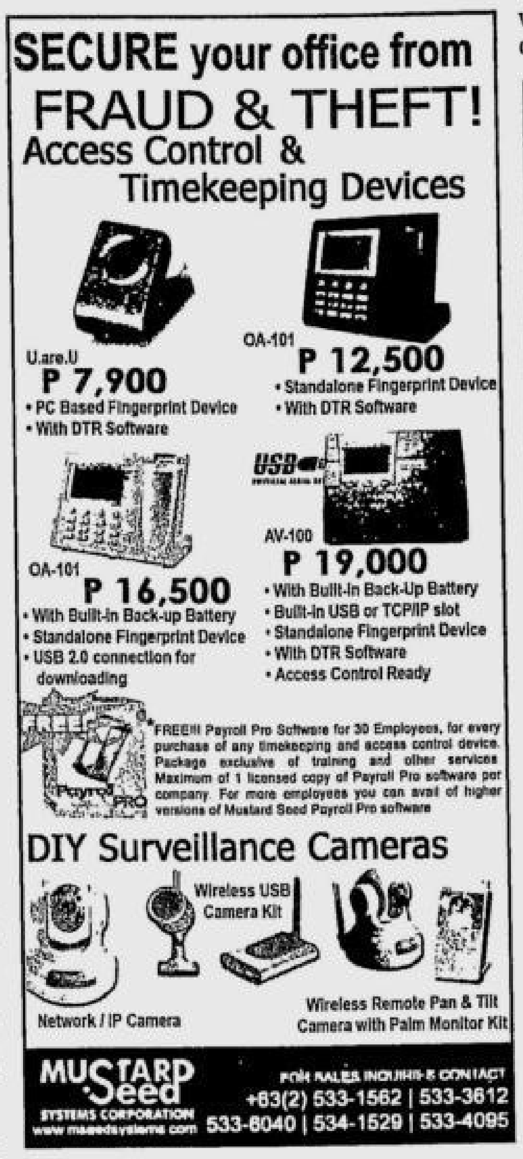
Over half or 51.5 percent of total value turnover was generated by foreign transactions.

Lim, however, said other sources should be developed to fuel the market's advance.

"We must tap more local investments, if we have to sustain the growth of our stock market," Lim said. "We are in the process of finalizing a coordinated campaign, involving other major capital market stakeholders, to entice local investors, especially the overseas Filipinos and their (beneficiaries) in the country, to take a look at our stock market."

"Just imagine if these OFWs have invested in 2003 and kept their money with our market: They'd also be making now a lot of money. Otherwise, they would be missing a lot of opportunity to earn extra income," Lim said.

Stock prices, as tracked by the PSEi, have advanced by 12.8 percent as of last Friday from their levels at the end of 2006.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RP tourism on fastest rise ...

From page B1

the country as well as the most forward-looking of entrepreneurs are now setting their sights on the resurgent sector, which has lain dormant for the last decade.

At stake is at least $2.7 billion in direct tourism revenues for this year alone, and an as yet unquantified amount of multiplier effects on the rest of the economy.

"We think there is a huge potential in the tourism industry," said SM Investments Corp. (SMIC) investor relations chief Corazon Guidote.

The firm, owned by taipan Henry Sy Sr., makes the bulk of its revenues from its shopping malls, but recently embarked on a P5-billion tourism project in Batangas province.

The move is a significant departure from SMIC's traditional comfort zone, and likely indicates a looming change in the country's wider business landscape.

"The prospects are promising because there are very few companies that are taking tourism as a serious endeavor," SMIC's executive vice president Josefino Lucas said.

Waking up

The fact that few companies have both feet in the tourism industry is no accident.

The industry languished over the last decade, with foreign tourist arrivals stuck at around the 2-million a year mark since it peaked in 1997--just as the country was hit hard by the East Asian financial crisis.

But while tourist arrivals boomed in other Asean countries worse hit by the financial crisis, tourism in the Philippines ground to a halt.

From its peak of 2.2 million foreign tourists in 1997, this number fell to a low of 1.7 million in 2001—less than a tenth of the numbers that neighboring Malaysia attracted during the same year.

In an interview, Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said the industry's plight was due to a combination of neglect in the late 1990s, to the weakened spending power of people in the region, to a lack of resolve on the part of the national government to push tourism as a major program.

That has changed in recent years with President Macapagal-Arroyo having included tourism as a major pillar of her latest five-year Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

The renewed focus has reaped tremendous benefits, according to Durano, who has overseen the resurgence of what was one of the country's strongest selling points up until the early 1980s.

"For the first time in many years, the tourism industry is growing at a very strong pace," he said, pointing to the surge in visitor arrivals since 2004. "For the past two years, we have grown at an average of 14 percent."

This is even more surprising when juxtaposed against the statistics of the region, where tourist arrivals have grown at an average of only 7 percent during the same period.

Although the strong growth in the Philippine tourism industry may be attributed to it having had very few arrivals in recent years—the so-called "base effect"—Durano points out that the country is also benefiting from a 10-year cycle in the business.

It's RP's time

"Every 10 years, people tend to look for new tourist destinations," the tourism chief said. "That time is now."

He explained that while the country has long been considered a tourist destination, its relative obscurity in recent years have allowed his office and some of the more aggressive industry players to market the country—especially its beach resorts—as a new destination.

"We have been under the radar for so long that we're virtually a new destination for many people abroad," he said.

In addition, the tourism department also underwent a radical paradigm change in recent years.

Under Durano's watch, tourism officials shifted their focus from trying to attract visitors from Europe and North America—the Holy Grail of the travel industry—to more modest targets.

The change in strategy was tantamount to shifting to a low-margin, high-volume business.

"We're now focusing on the East Asian countries," he said. "We want more visitors from Japan, Korea and China."

Roadblocks

For the full potential of the industry to be realized, however, both the government and the private sector would have to make major adjustments in policy.

Some of these adjustments are guaranteed to be painful.

"The biggest roadblock to the improvement of the tourism industry right now is [the lack of] airline access," according to Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri. "Many tourists want to fly to the country, but there simply aren't enough available flights."

The solution—in the mind of many public and private sector observers—is bound to hurt on of the country's richest and most influential businessmen.

(To be continued)

PhilWeb

From page B4

which allows seamless pay-in and pay-out for Internet-based commerce.

In addition to its strong business results, PhilWeb also reported huge gains on its investment in ISM Communications Corp. Based on stock market data as of the end-April, the market value of PhilWeb's investment in ISM has reached P800 million from an acquisition cost of only P115 million. ISM itself had a banner year, managing to turn around recently acquired Eastern Telecoms, which reported P701 million in net revenues and a P31-million profit for 2006.

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Housing Authority (NHA), through the Bids and Awards Committee invites geodetic engineers/consultants who have completed similar projects to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

No.	Name of Projects	ABC (Php) – Source of Fund	Duration (cal. days)	Work Description
1	Survey Works for Special Patent of Parola Estate and Lot Titling of Proclaimed Areas for Socialized Housing in Tondo and Binondo, Manila	P 6,083,227.31 (Corp. Receipts)	270	Boundary, survey, issuance of Special Patent, structural, topographic and consolidation/ subdivision survey and individual lot titling of approx. 2,820 lots

Checklist of requirements for eligibility is available for examination upon submission of a letter of intent addressed to the Chairperson, BAC upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P300.00 at the BAC Secretariat Office, 3F NHA Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City. For more information, the Secretariat may be contacted at Tel. Nos. 929-80-16 & 926-58-16.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184. The bidders shall be evaluated/shortlisted based on applicable experience, qualification of personnel, current workload relative to capacity and financial capability. The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants consisting of seven (7) consultants from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible. Only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. The contract will be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who will be determined as such during post-qualification. The bidding shall follow the quality-cost based evaluation process.

TOR and bid documents will be available to shortlisted bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,000.00. The mode of payment is in cash.

Bid security shall be in the form of cash, manager's check and cashier's check only.

The schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
Deadline of submission of LOIs and Issuance of eligibility documents	May 21, 2007
Submission/Opening of eligibility documents	May 22, 2007 not later than 10:00 a.m. at the Operation Center, 3F NHA Main Building
Shortlisting of Consultants	May 23 – May 30, 2007
Issuance of bid documents	May 31 – June 14, 2007
Pre-bid Conference	June 15, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at the Operation Center
Submission of bids	June 28, 2007, not later than 10:00 a.m. at the Operation Center
Opening of technical proposals	Immediately after the deadline of submission of bids
Opening of financial proposals	Shall be announced through notices

The NHA reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) FROILAN R. KAMPITAN
Assistant General Manager/Chairperson, BAC
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(PDI – May 15, 2007)

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March 8, 1917 – May 14, 2007
Parañaque City

peacefully joined our Lord on 14 May 2007
at the age of 90.

Her loving family, **Eloisa "Elsie" A. Tuason-Balagtas & Lorenzo Dizon Balagtas, Commissioner Florentino "Boy" A. Tuason, Jr. & Agnes Kison-Tuason**; grandchildren, **Bernadette T. Balagtas-Evangelista & Lloyd Gabriel Evangelista** and **Catherine Anne Kison Tuason**, and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie at Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque City. Interment will be on May 19, 2007 at the Manila Memorial Park after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

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PAG-IBIG HOUSE AND LOT DONATION FOR LABOR DAY

Vice President Noli "Kabayan" De Castro, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) and the Pag-IBIG Fund Board of Trustees, is flanked by the three lucky winners of house and lot packages from the Pag-IBIG Fund drawn during the Labor Day Program. Joining the Vice President is Lawyer Romero Quimbo (far left), Pag-IBIG Fund President and CEO and 2006 TOYM Awardee for Government Service. The winners, proudly showing their certificates are, (from left) Roland Ronio, 19 years old and sophomore student taking up computer technology at the De La Salle University, Dasmariñas, Cative (beside his mother), Elizabeth Fernandez, 33 years old and a sower from New Creation Manufacturing, San Dionisio, Parañaque, and Pablo Tobias, 47 years old, and president of the Employees' Union of Indo-Phil Textile Mills in Marilao, Bulacan.

People, Events & Products

Private sector shares cost of saving the environment

AYALA-LED MANILA WATER CO. Inc. (MWCI) has earmarked P5 billion for its wastewater management program meant to preserve the country's water resources.

"Since we believe that water sanitation is among the various steps to alleviate pollution of our rivers and lakes, the company has spent and will continue spending to the tune of P5 billion pesos for wastewater management," Manila Water president Tony Aquino said in an interview at the sideline of the recent national observance of Earth Day at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"We do not mind sharing the cost of preserving our environment, particularly our water resources. However, as a company policy, we see to it that we start the cleaning in our own backyard," Aquino said referring to its campaign to reduce its water and electricity consumption of its employees, lessen waste generation and practice sanitation both at the workplace and at home.

DENR Secretary Angelo T. Reyes delivered his State of the Philippine Environmental Address during the occasion.

At the same occasion, US Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney called for concerted efforts to reduce energy and water consumption, recycle resources, rethink what can be done to further preserve the environment, and pass on to others the passion to save the earth.

Reyes warned earlier that water quality in the Philippines was in a "terrible state" as 16 of the country's major rivers—five of them in Metro Manila—were considered biologically dead during summer months due to pollution. Studies showed that about 48 percent of water pollution nationwide was caused by household waste, compounded by the lack of an adequate sewerage system.

"Currently only seven percent of the Metro Manila population is connected to a sewer system. By way of comparison, even Kathmandu in Nepal and Dhaka in Bangladesh are better off with 20 percent and 30 percent, respectively," the secretary said.

"Domestic waste's contribution to pollution is even worse in Metro Manila as figures soared to 58 percent. The remaining 42 percent is due to industrial wastes," Aquino reiterated.

Reyes further cited a World Bank study estimating yearly losses of $1.3 billion or P62 billion triggered by water pollution. The same study revealed that the Philippines has to invest P25 billion annually, over the next 10 years, for sanitation and sewerage infrastructure.

In line with the government's environmental plan to revive and effectively manage major rivers, Manila water secured, through the government-owned Land Bank of the Philippines, a $64-million loan from the World Bank to finance the construction of the San Mateo and FTI Septage Treatment Plants. When fully operational, these two facilities would have a combined capacity of 1,400 cubic meters daily, benefiting some 1.3 million residents in the east zone of the metropolis.

Manila Water recently launched its free septic tank desludging services called "Sanitasyon Para sa Barangay" to address the problem about only few households having connections to a sewer systems. The company deployed a fleet of some 40 desludging tankers to collect the septage from the households. About 160,000 households benefited from Manila Water's sanitation program.

Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids prevents heart-related death

A STUDY SHOWS THAT omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids can prevent heart-related death in patients who had heart attack. This study was conducted by the renowned Gruppo Italiano por lo Studio della Sopravvivenza nell' Infarto Myocardio (Gissi) based in southern Italy.

The study reported that omega-3 Pufa improves clinical outcome in heart patients by decreasing total deaths by 40 percent, heart-related deaths by 30 percent and sudden deaths by 20 percent. The study was published in the prestigious journal Lancet.

Gissi lasted for two years and enrolled 11,324 patients surviving heart attack in the preceding three months. The subjects were divided into four groups and were randomly given supplementation of omega-3 Pufa, vitamin E or none at all. While a reduction in death was seen in the omega-3 group, subjects who were given vitamin E supplementation showed no significant cardiovascular benefit.

Omega-3 Pufa prevents heart attack by producing a substance called prostacyclin which prevents blood from being sticky and prevents blood clot. It also enhances the high density lipoprotein (HDL) which is also known as the good cholesterol, preventing the blocking of arteries of the heart and brain.

Omega-3 Pufa is derived from deep-sea fish but is now available in soft gel capsules. A daily dose of two to three soft gels of omega-3 supplement is highly recommended for those who suffered previous heart attacks and those who have risk factors such as smoking, hypertension, high cholesterol and strong family history of heart disease.

One of the most prescribed omega-3 brands is Omegabloc which is taken by many for prevention of heart attack and other heart-related illnesses. It is available as an over-the-counter food supplement at the Mercury Drug Store outlets nationwide.

Omegabloc is manufactured by Now International, one of the leading manufacturers of food supplements in the United States. It is locally distributed by Trianon International Inc. For inquirers about Omegabloc, call the Trianon hotline 815-3239, or text 0917-8836164.

In Ecija town, growers get to raise farm yield

Farmers form clusters, relying on each other to maximize harvests, earnings

By Amy R. Remo

EFFORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRIculture to increase farmers' income and reduce food prices have started to bear fruit, as more growers have reported an increase in yield from their hybrid farms.

DA officials cited the case of Bagong Buhay Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Mabini, Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija, where over 200 ha of rice field were planted to hybrid rice this dry cropping season.

In that model hybrid rice cluster, farmers would harvest an average yield of 180 cavans a hectare at 56 kilos a cavan.

According to Jojo Garcia, chair of the rice cluster, his own 12-ha farm would yield an average of 200 cavans a hectare.

Garcia said that, in the cluster, the highest yield per hectare was reported to be 246 cavans, while the lowest yield was 173 cavans, which is still much higher than fields planted to ordinary or inbred rice varieties.

Another member of the cluster, Sebastian Garcia, harvested 205 cavans a hectare.

Garcia, a Mabini town official, said that if he were to sell the 205 cavans for P10.30 a kilo, he would get a gross income of P118,244. Deducting the hybrid rice cost of production of P45,000 a hectare, he would enjoy a net income of P73,244.

Farmers who grow ordinary rice usually earn P15,000 to P25,000 a hectare.

Coop member Jose Rigor also attested to improvements in earnings and yield, citing a significant increase in his income to P60,000 a hectare from P10,000 to P15,000 a hectare.

Rigor, who now plants hybrid rice, owns a 7-ha farm. He used to plant inbred rice varieties.

"I now live with my family in a beautiful house, and bought a unit of hand tractor, an owner-type jeep and a van from my hybrid rice earnings," said Rigor.

With farmers forming clusters of at least 100 ha, they get coordinated assistance from the government, through the DA-Ginintuang Masaganang Ani Rice Program.

DA programs have been striving to provide farmers with adequate irrigation, post-harvest facilities, farm-to-market roads, credit and marketing assistance.

"The main advantage of the clustering approach is the convergence of all the production support services to the farmers," DA-GMA Rice Program national coordinator Frisco Malabanan said in a statement.

He added that this approach contributed to the enhancement of farmers' productivity and profitability—an objective Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap hopes to attain through this program.

To curb rising power rates, DOE turns to nuke option

By Abigail L. Ho

GOING INTO NUCLEAR POWER GENERAtion may be a feasible way to bring down power rates, but human resources, with enough technical capabilities and support, will have to be developed first.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said that power rates are high because of the country's archipelagic make-up.

It is difficult to transmit power from one island to another, he explained.

But if the country will harness nuclear power, then there's a chance electricity rates will go down, Lotilla said.

"Right now, we've chosen not to have a nuclear plant," he said.

But Lotilla added that if we were to have one, and it would serve the power needs of several islands, then this development would actually bring rates down.

"The government has yet to consider nuclear power, but as I've said in the past, we should not close ourselves to any option," he said, adding that everything boils down to the country's choice of fuel.

But due to the hazardous nature of nuclear power generation, it would take more to convince the Filipino people of the viability of opening a nuclear plant.

"We need to develop first the human resources and technical capability that will allow us to evaluate whether or not we should go into nuclear (power)," Lotilla said. "That's what we'll do with the (Department of Science and Technology). We need a scientific and technical approach to that."

The country already has a 620-megawatt (MW) nuclear power plant in Bataan—about 100 km away from Manila, situated at the foot of a dormant volcano and reported to be near an earthquake fault line.

It has never produced an iota of power, but the government continues to pay for its construction.

The plant was completed in 1985 but was never fired up. A team of experts from abroad inspected the plant a year after it was completed, and concluded that it was unsafe and inoperable.

Accusations of an $80-million bribery likewise ensued after the late President Ferdinand Marcos decided to award the contract for the construction of the plant to American firm Westinghouse, right under the noses of members of the panel that evaluated the bids and approved that of Westinghouse archrival General Electric.

The government in the late 1970s borrowed $300 million from a number of foreign banks to bankroll the project. The amount the government would have to repay, however, had ballooned to more than $2 billion due to interest charges. Debt payments would not be completed until 2018.

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STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Head Office and Branches)
As of March 30, 2007

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Cash and Cash Items	₱ 5,816,326,030
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	66,040,572,965
Due from Other Banks	23,398,991,177
Interbank Loans Receivable	44,018,089,918
Trading Account Securities (Net)	12,222,923,778
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	106,352,605,201
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)	214,217,747,612
Equity Investments (Net)	25,365,250,891
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	8,398,512,781
Other Assets (Net):	46,209,994,446
Property Owned/Acquired	24,812,599,328
Others	21,397,395,118
TOTAL ASSETS	₱ 552,041,014,799

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	₱ 23,510,689,539
Savings Deposits	173,271,380,195
Time Deposits	246,468,086,722
Special/Other Deposits	324,168,924
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	262,497,780
Outstanding Checks / Payment Orders	1,531,583,185
Bills Payable:	11,573,462,226
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs	394,137,096
Interbank Borrowings	1,163,949,399
Others	10,015,375,731
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	1,432,000,869
Other Liabilities	16,767,538,313
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)	15,604,868,161
TOTAL LIABILITIES	490,746,275,914

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	36,145,387,000
Surplus	16,140,005,683
Surplus Reserves	636,285,459
Other Capital Accounts	8,373,060,743
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	61,294,738,885
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	₱ 552,041,014,799

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	₱ 12,999,486,163
Bills for Collection	1,746,701,926
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	19,133,261,306
Spot/Future Exchange Sold	38,090,528,497
Assets Held in Trust Investment Management Agreement	116,188,706,010
Invested In:	
Government Securities	84,843,834,947
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks	15,649,075,424
Loans and Discounts	4,269,332,474
Other Assets	11,426,463,165
Accountabilities:	
Trust and Other Fiduciary	79,686,734,429
Common Trust Funds	23,191,209,497
Investment/Fund Management	12,327,999,704
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities	982,762,380
Other Contingent Accounts	10,656,420,686
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	₱ 198,815,104,588

*Other Information:

1. Deposits of:	
a) Government	₱ 4,307,236,852
b) Banks	743,403,650
c) Trust Department	170,898,905

2. Compliance with Magna Carta Law:

	Small Enterprises	Medium Enterprises
Prescribed Ratio of Compliance:	6%	2%
Actual Compliance:	6.76%	15.15%

3. Amount of non-performing loans	16,393,233,623
4. Ratio of non-performing loans to total loan portfolio	6.10%
5. Amount of classified loans and other risk assets	25,353,906,963
6. General provision for loan and other losses	2,243,860,053
7. Specific provision for loan and other losses	14,984,995,150
8. Return on Equity (ROE)	11.85%
9. Amount of DOSRI loans/advances	12,650,485,018
10. Ratio of DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio	4.71%
11. Amount of past due DOSRI loans/advances	2,200,000
12. Ratio of past due DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio	0.00%

A. Directors, Officers, Stockholders & Related Interests (DOSRI):

I. Loans, other credit accommodations & guarantees classified as DOSRI accounts under regulations existing prior to the effectivity of BSP Circular No. 423	₱ 7,939,272,386
II. New DOSRI loans, other credit accommodations & guarantees granted after the effectivity of BSP Circular No. 423	17,623,444

B. Non-DOSRI Loans prior to BSP Circular No. 423 dated March 15, 2004:

I. Loans, other credit accommodations and guarantees, as well as availments of previously approved loans and committed credit lines not considered DOSRI accounts prior to the issuance of BSP Circular No. 423 but are allowed a transition period as provided in said Circular	4,693,689,188

* Amended to conform with Circular No. 266 dated August 17, 1999 and Memorandum to All Banks dated November 29, 1999

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI)S.S.

We, Arthur Ty and Joshua E. Naing of the above-mentioned Bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above Statement of Condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd.) JOSHUA E. NAING*
EVP/Controller

(Sgd.) ARTHUR TY
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 3rd day of May, 2007 at Makati City, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificate No. 17674606, issued at Makati City on January 30, 2007 and Community Tax Certificate No. *21129063, issued at Taytay Rizal on January 20, 2007, respectively.

Doc. No.: 321
Page No. 66
Book No. II
Series of 2007

(Sgd.) CYNTHIA O. RUIZ
Notary Public
Until December 31 2008
PTR [illegible] Makati City

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Bank and its Subsidiaries and Affiliates)
As of March 30, 2007

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	₱ 6,566,358,711
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	73,077,689,544
Due from Other Banks	30,241,772,054
Interbank Loans Receivable	49,120,365,925
Trading Account Securities (Net)	28,335,719,894
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	127,618,674,237
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)	265,805,830,733
Equity Investments (Net)	11,270,295,712
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	11,298,472,561
Other Assets (Net):	52,351,942,935
Property Owned/Acquired	27,633,414,544
Others	24,718,528,391
TOTAL ASSETS	₱ 655,687,122,306

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	₱ 26,278,296,983
Savings Deposits	181,319,604,635
Time Deposits	289,319,479,103
Special/Other Deposits	324,168,924
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	288,381,089
Due to Banks	4,585,170
Outstanding Checks / Payment Orders	1,883,219,951
Bills Payable:	51,393,735,772
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs	394,137,096
Interbank Borrowings	2,163,949,399
Deposit Substitutes	27,794,345,470
Others	21,041,303,807
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	5,062,434,917
Other Liabilities	20,151,394,191
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)	15,604,868,161
TOTAL LIABILITIES	591,630,168,896
Minority Interest in Allied Undertakings/Subsidiaries/ Affiliates	2,762,574,150

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	36,145,102,955
Surplus	16,139,930,103
Surplus Reserves	636,285,459
Other Capital Accounts	8,373,060,743
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	61,294,379,260
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	₱ 655,687,122,306

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	₱ 13,125,508,832
Bills for Collection	1,774,721,088
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	19,133,261,306
Spot/Future Exchange Sold	38,090,528,497
Assets Held in Trust Investment Management Agreement	116,489,165,369
Invested In:	
Government Securities	84,843,834,947
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks	15,861,661,107
Loans and Discounts	4,269,332,474
Other Assets	11,514,336,841
Accountabilities:	
Trust and Other Fiduciary	79,983,537,344
Common Trust Funds	23,191,209,497
Investment/Fund Management	12,327,999,704
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities	986,418,824
Other Contingent Accounts	10,657,044,377
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	₱ 199,270,229,469

*Other Information:

1. Deposits of:	
a) Government	₱ 4,307,236,852
b) Banks	773,096,482
c) Trust Department	242,298,677

2. List of Bank's Financial Subsidiaries:

- a) First Metro International Investment Co., Ltd. - HK
- b) First Metro Investment Corporation
- c) Philippine Savings Bank
- d) MBTC Venture Capital Corporation
- e) Metropolitan Bank (Bahamas) Ltd.
- f) Metrobank Card Corporation
- g) MB Remittance Centre, Ltd.-HK
- h) Metro Remittance Center, Inc., NY
- i) Metro Remittance (Italia) SpA
- j) ORIX Metro Leasing and Finance Corporation
- k) Solid Philippines Venture and Capital Corporation
- l) MBTC Remittance GmbH - Vienna (formerly MBTC Exchange Services, GmbH)
- m) Metro Remittance (UK) Ltd.
- n) Metro Remittance Singapore PTE Ltd.
- o) Metro Remittance Center, S.A.- Spain
- p) Philbancor Venture Capital Corporation
- q) Metro Remittance Center (California), Inc.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI)S.S.

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(Sgd.) JOSHUA E. NAING*
EVP/Controller

(Sgd.) ARTHUR TY
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 3rd day of May, 2007 at Makati City, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificate No. 17674696, issued at Makati City on January 30, 2007 and Community Tax Certificate No. *21129063, issued at Taytay, Rizal on January 26, 2007, respectively.

Doc. No.: 320
Page No. 65
Book No. II
Series of 2007

(Sgd.) CYNTHIA O. RUIZ
Notary Public
Until December 31 2008
PTR [illegible] Makati City

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BUSINESS

Enough power for crucial count

Napocor: There'll be no power outage until end of canvassing

By Abigail L. Ho

TO PREVENT POWER OUTAGES DURING the crucial days when votes are being counted, the National Power Corp. said that it has stocked 30 to 45 days worth of coal, and more than 10 days worth of oil for its plants.

In a briefing yesterday, Napocor senior vice president Silvano Zanoria said the state firm's policy dictated that it keep an inventory of between 30 and 45 days worth of coal for its plants, as well as those of its independent power producers.

Right now, he said, Napocor has 30 to 45 days worth of coal on hand, excluding those still in transit.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said Napocor also has enough oil to last up to 10 days or even more—enough to run its plants during the crucial days of canvassing.

As of yesterday, Zanoria said available capacity in the Luzon grid stood at 6,687 megawatts (MW), enough to cover the projected peak demand of 5,170 MW. Considering these figures, the grid had a 29-percent reserve margin yesterday.

For the Visayas grid, supply has been pegged at 1,168 MW, while peak demand has been projected to reach just 893 MW. This means a reserve margin of 31 percent. The Mindanao grid yesterday had an available supply of 1,417 MW, vis-à-vis a projected peak demand of 956 MW, or a reserve margin of 48 percent.

In Metro Manila, Manila Electric Co. energy management head Nixon Hao said no outages would take place in its franchise area, which contained 2,854 polling centers and 124 canvassing centers.

"We have 170 crews ready and available should there be any problem," Hao said. "The priority places are schools, polling centers and canvassing centers.

The Bicol region has been reconnected to the Luzon grid, after almost two weeks of disconnection, and is not expected to suffer any more power outages during the next several days, said National Transmission Corp. senior vice president and chief operating officer Jesusito Sulit.

"The Bicol line has been up since Friday, so there's a constant supply of electricity there now," Sulit said.

Lotilla also said power in all the typhoon-ravaged communities had been restored before Election day.

The National Electrification Administration, the agency in charge of the country's 119 electric cooperatives, has also put in place measures to ensure that there will be no power outages in the provinces.

Authorities tell exporters not to worry over peso strength

By Michelle V. Remo

EXPORTERS NEED NOT WORRY TOO MUCH about the effects of a strengthening peso on their earnings, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which then tried to call the traders' attention to other major Asian currencies that have also been appreciating against the dollar this year.

"The peso does not only compete with the dollar, but also with a number currencies," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said. "Because other Asian currencies move in the same direction, the value of the peso in real terms has not changed that much."

The peso, which has broken into, and hovered in, the 47-to-the-dollar level since early last month, has again raised concerns that the appreciation would erode competitiveness of Philippine-made products and thus pull down earnings.

Appreciation of the peso, holding values of other currencies constant, makes Philippine goods more expensive in dollar terms and therefore less competitive.

But Tetangco said currencies of neighboring countries have risen as well, offsetting the eroding effects of the peso's rise on Philippine-made products.

Citing numbers from the first trading day in January to May 11, the BSP said the peso's appreciation against the US dollar averaged at 3.9 percent.

He then compared the figure with the 8.6-percent appreciation of the Thai baht, the 3.4 percent for the Malaysian ringgit, the 1.6 percent for the Chinese yuan, the 1.4 percent for the Indonesian rupiah and the 0.8 percent for the singapore dollar.

In terms of volatility, which measures the degree of fluctuation of a currency, Tetangco said, the peso performed relatively well compared with competitor currencies.

Volatility rate for the peso stood at 1.1 percent, making it more stable than the 3.9 percent for the baht and 1.3 percent for the Japanese yen.

"The peso is just moving with other currencies in the region, and its level of appreciation is within range of ... other Asian currencies," he said.

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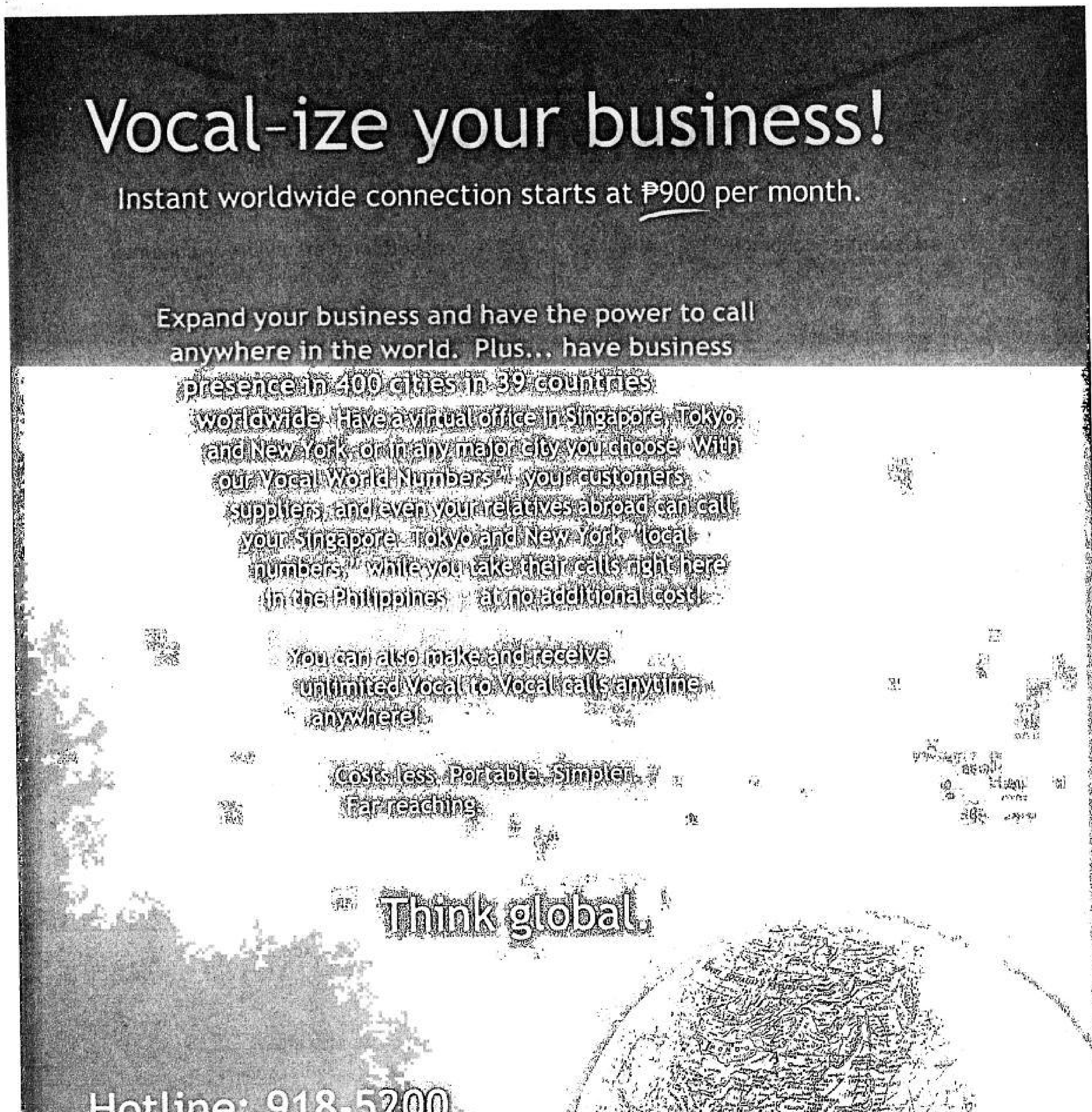

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TUESDAY, MAY 15, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

IN THIS ISSUE

▨ **Maurice Arcache** on a grand tour of HK /C3

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LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

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▨ **Cory Quirino:** Wellness one day at a time /D4

Before
After

THERMAGE is an incision-free procedure that lifts and tightens the skin to give the face's contours better definition.

The Philippines chalked up the largest number of Thermage patients in the world last year, but now other non-surgical cosmetic procedures are available for beauty conscious Filipinos to try

VISIBLE results of Pan G include brow elevation, fullness and elevation of the cheeks and tightening of the jowl and neck areas.

Non-invasive is in

By Cheche V. Moral

EARLY THIS YEAR, THERmage International cited celebrity doctor Vicki Belo of the Belo Medical Group for having had the most number of Thermage patients in the world in 2006, coming out on top of some 2,000 cosmetic surgeons from the United States, Europe and Asia.

While the recognition is a personal achievement for Belo and her team, it's also significant to look at the implications of Thermage's popularity in the Philippines. More than a testament to the efficacy of this procedure, the citation seems to suggest that more Filipinos are willing to undergo some form of cosmetic procedure so long as it's non-invasive.

A French cosmetic surgeon who was a recent guest of the Belo group also confirmed that the trend now points toward minimized surgical intervention.

BELO. The world's No. 1 Thermage doctor in 2006

Thermage is a non-surgical procedure that promises tighter skin; it smoothes out wrinkles and defines the face's natural contours with the use of radio-frequency technology called ThermaCool.

A patented device called ThermaTip is used to heat up "large volumes of collagen in the deeper layers of skin and its underlying tissues," said to instantly tighten skin. Over time, the claim is that it also stimulates the production of new collagen that results in smoother and younger-looking skin. Skin continues to improve for the next six months, after which the process is repeated in most patients, according to the Belo clinic.

The procedure is done on the face, neck and eye area, costing P100,000, P35,000 and P65,000 respectively. (Belo now also performs Thermage on the hands and abdominal area.)

Thermage is generally well tolerated, with less than 1 percent in 70,000 patients to have reported side effects like swelling and blisters on the treated area. Some have reported temporary redness.

As the ThermaTip touches the patient's skin, a brief, deep heating sensation is felt; the skin's surface is cooled after each application. In some cases, topical anesthetic is given to the patient. But since this is a non-invasive procedure, patients can go about their normal activities immediately after the procedure. Depending on the size of the treated area, one session can take a few minutes to an hour.

A walk-through in a cosmetic surgeon's clinic these days can feel like a tour of the set of "Star Wars."

Tenor and BioShaper

Tenor and BioShaper are two of the latest non-surgical body-shaping treatments offered by the Belo clinic, and the devices used are akin to the droids in the George Lucas saga.

For the cynic, the promised results may seem just as fantastical as sci-fi: Tenor melts fat and tightens skin with radio frequency energy, while with BioShaper, you'll never have to go to the gym again as a session mimics 300 sit-ups while you're lying down on a bed like a contented puppy.

Tell that, however, to the man or woman who clocks in two hours of gym five days a week and lives on food that tastes like cardboard without seeing visible results, but would never ever dream of going under the knife, and you have an instant hit.

Both procedures are guaranteed painless. Tenor requires 6-8 sessions, costing P8,000 to P12,000 per session, depending on the area. It's performed on the abs, thighs, arms, chest, buttocks and back. BioShaper may require 20 sessions at P1,500 a visit.

Before
After

UNLIKE laser procedures, Thermage can be performed on patients of all skin types, and requires no downtime.

Pan G

Another popular procedure is Pan G, or Pan Germinal Rejuvenation Treatment. The promised result is having the effect of a facelift without surgery, as it uses radio frequency energy and high-frequency currents to tone and lift the skin. Belo, who has tried Pan G, swears by its effectiveness.

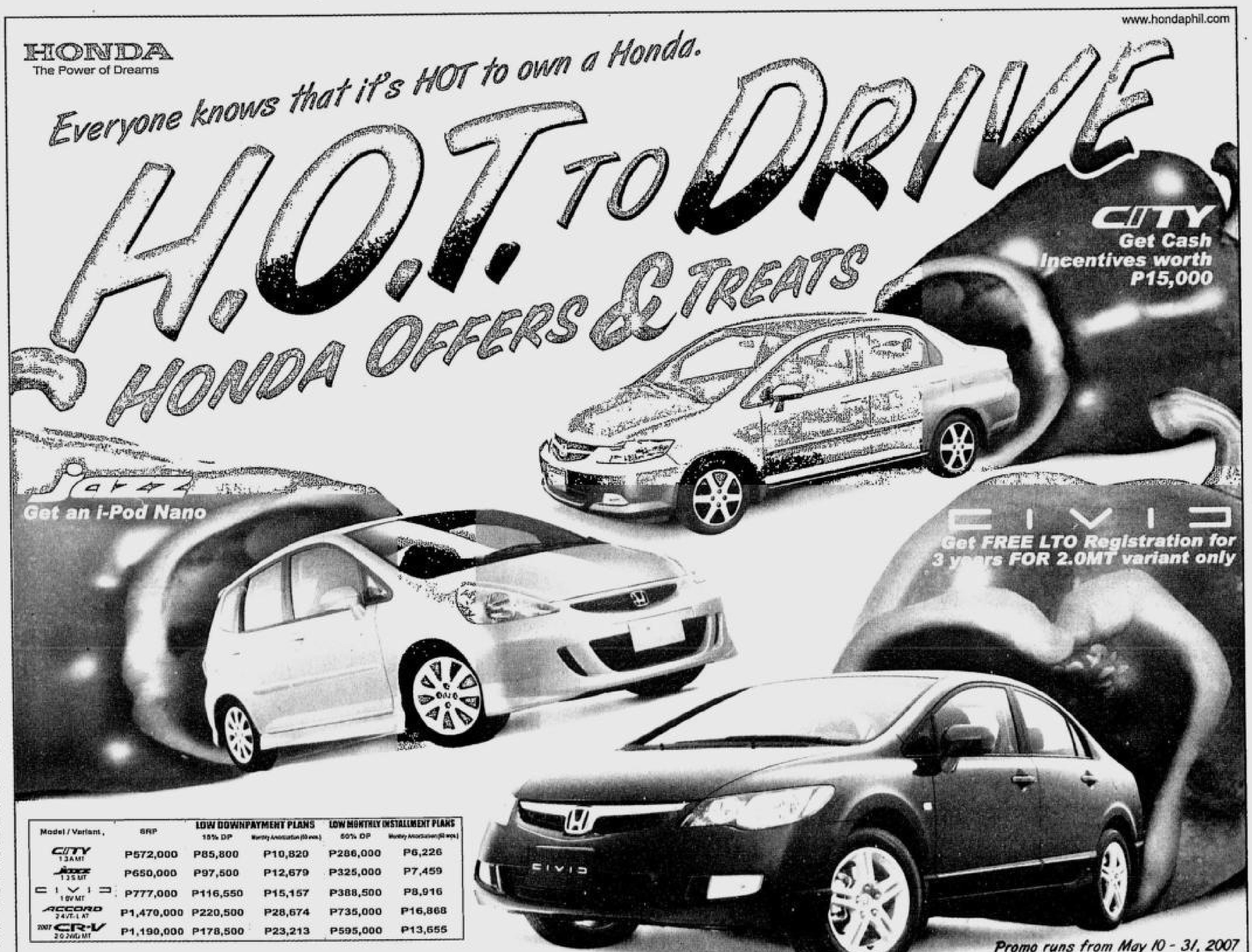
Visible results include brow elevation, fullness and elevation of the cheeks and tightening of the jowl and neck areas. Results are said to have been observed immediately after a session.

Pan G is meant for patients as young as 20 years old who wish to preempt skin sagging, and slightly older patients who are showing early signs of facial aging. Even patients as old as 65, for whom surgical facelift isn't an option, can undergo Pan G to rejuvenate their skin. Post-op cosmetic patients also opt for Pan G to prolong the effect of their surgical treatment.

There's minimal discomfort with Pan G, and only with patients who have sensitive teeth owing to the nerve stimulation that takes place during treatment. Only those patients on a pacemaker, are pregnant or have a history of seizures are disallowed from undergoing Pan G.

A session can last up to 1½ hours, done twice a week or up to 20 sessions for the whole program. Each visit costs P5,000. A maintenance visit is required every 4-6 weeks after completing the program.

NON-INVASIVE/ C2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JAZZ 1.3S MT	P650,000	P97,500	P12,679	P325,000	P7,459
CIVIC 1.8V MT	P777,000	P116,550	P15,157	P388,500	P8,916
ACCORD 2.4VT-L AT	P1,470,000	P220,500	P28,674	P735,000	P16,868
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HONDA

Thin people might be fat on the inside, doctors warn

LONDON—IF IT REALLY IS WHAT'S on the inside that counts, then a lot of thin people might be in trouble.

Some doctors now think that the internal fat surrounding vital organs like the heart, liver or pancreas—invisible to the naked eye—could be as dangerous as the more obvious external fat that bulges underneath the skin.

"Being thin doesn't automatically mean you're not fat," said Dr. Jimmy Bell, a professor of molecular imaging at Imperial College, London. Since 1994, Bell and his team have scanned nearly 800 people with MRI machines to create "fat maps" showing where people store their fat.

According to their data, people who maintain their weight through diet instead of exercise, are likely to have major deposits of internal fat, even if they are otherwise slim. "The whole concept of being fat needs to be redefined," said Bell, whose research is funded by Britain's Medical Research Council.

Without a clear warning signal—like a rounder middle—doctors worry that thin people may be lulled into falsely assuming that because they're not overweight, they're healthy.

"Just because someone is lean doesn't make them immune to diabetes or other risk factors for heart disease," said Dr. Louis Teichholz, chief of cardiology at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey, who was not involved in Bell's research.

Surprising levels

Even people with normal Body Mass Index scores—a standard obesity measure that divides your weight by the square of your height—can have surprising levels of fat deposits inside.

Of the women scanned by Bell and his colleagues, as many as 45 percent of those with normal BMI scores (20 to 25) actually had excessive levels of internal fat. Among men, the percentage was nearly 60 percent. Relating the news to what Bell refers to as TOFIs, or people who are "thin outside, fat inside," is rarely uneventful. "The thinner people are, the bigger the surprise," he said. He said that they have even found TOFIs among people who are professional models.

According to Bell, people who are fat on the inside are essentially on the threshold of being obese. They eat too many fatty, sugary foods—and exercise too little to work it off—but they are not eating enough to actually be fat. Scientists believe we naturally accumulate fat around the belly first, but at some point, the body may start storing it elsewhere.

Still, most experts believe that being of normal weight is an indicator of good health, and that BMI is a reliable measurement.

"BMI won't give you the exact indication of where fat is, but it's a useful clinical tool," said Dr. Toni Steer, a nutritionist at Britain's Medical Research Council.

Doctors are unsure about the exact dangers of internal fat, but some suspect it contributes to the risk of heart disease and diabetes. They theorize that internal fat disrupts the body's communication systems. The fat enveloping internal organs might be sending the body mistaken chemical signals to store fat inside organs like the liver or pancreas. This could ultimately lead to insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, or heart disease.

As much at risk

Experts have long known that fat, active people can be healthier than their skinny, inactive counterparts. "Normal-weight persons who are sedentary and unfit are at much higher risk for mortality than obese persons who are active and fit," said Dr. Steven Blair, an obesity expert at the University of South Carolina.

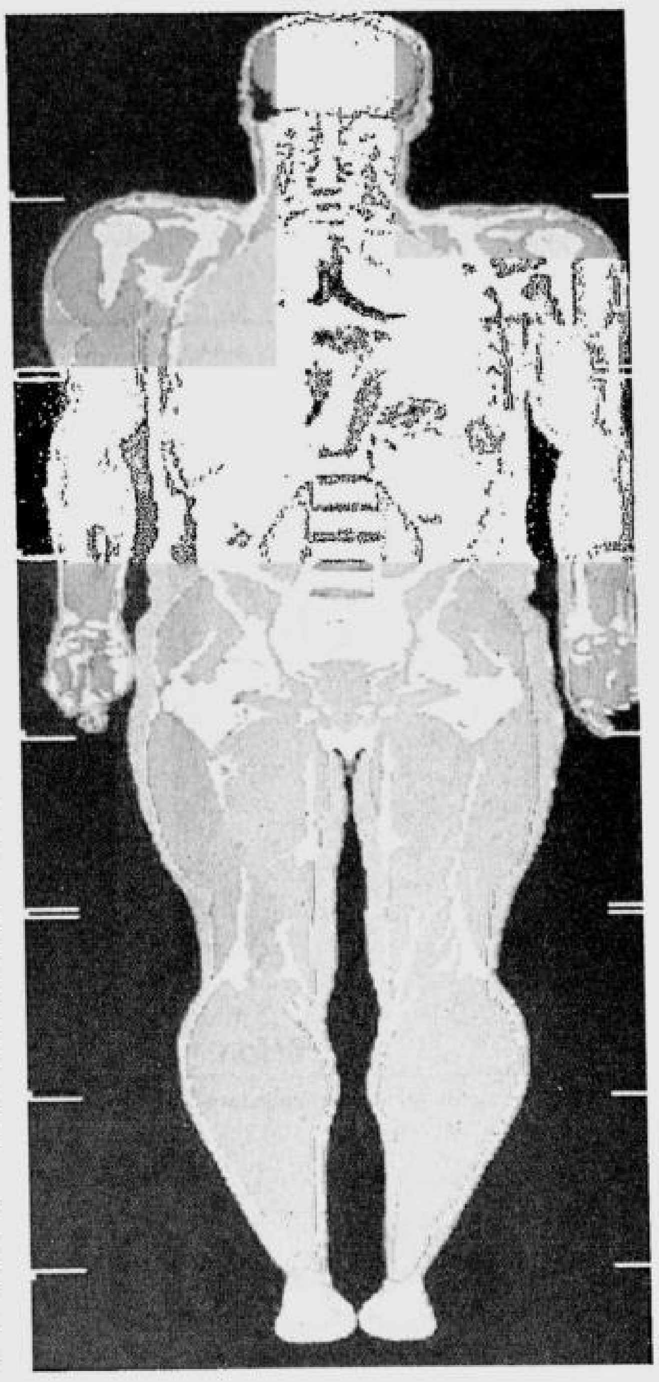
For example, despite their ripples of fat, super-sized Sumo wrestlers probably have a better metabolic profile than some of their slim, seated spectators, Bell said. That's because the wrestlers' fat is primarily stored under the skin, not streaking throughout their vital organs and muscles.

The good news is that internal fat can be easily burned off through exercise or even by improving your diet.

"Even if you don't see it on your bathroom scale, caloric restriction and physical exercise have an aggressive effect on visceral fat," said Dr. Bob Ross, an obesity expert at Queen's University in Canada.

Because many factors contribute to heart disease, Teichholz says it's difficult to determine the precise danger of internal fat—though it certainly doesn't help.

"Obesity is a risk factor, but it's lower down on the totem pole of risk factors," he said, explaining that whether or not people smoke, their family histories and blood pressure and cholesterol rates are more important determinants than both external and internal fat. *AP*



MRI scan image provides a detailed look at where fat is stored internally in the human body. Internal fat is shown as yellow, external fat is green and muscles are red.

(AP, IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON, HO)

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Discounted rates for massage chairs

AFTER AN EXHAUSTING DAY AT work, there would be nothing better than knowing you could come home to a recliner that will give you a full-body therapeutic massage while watching your favorite movie.

Treat yourself to such an experience as OSIM, the global leader in branded healthy lifestyle products, is lowering prices on two of its bestselling massage chairs for a limited period of time.

The OSIM iSymphonic is the first of its kind to synchronize massage and music therapy. Like the skillful hands of an acupressure massage master, the unique optical sensor of the OSIM iSymphonic accurately locates your essential acupressure points for a more effective massage.

The chair has five Healthcare programs and a wide range of manual massage courses allowing you to select the most desirable massage procedure. It comes with compact disc player, headphones, side table and remote control stand.

The upholstery is made of high quality polyurethane synthetic soft leather in black, brown or ivory that has been treated with anti-bacterial agent and helps prolong the life of the upholstery.

Formerly costing P229,000, the product is now available for P209,000.

Also available at a discounted price is the OSIM iDesire, the world's first intelligent massage chair that gives a full-body massage, providing eight pre-programmed massage sessions with specific health objectives while incorporating state-of-the-art technology in every facet of its design.

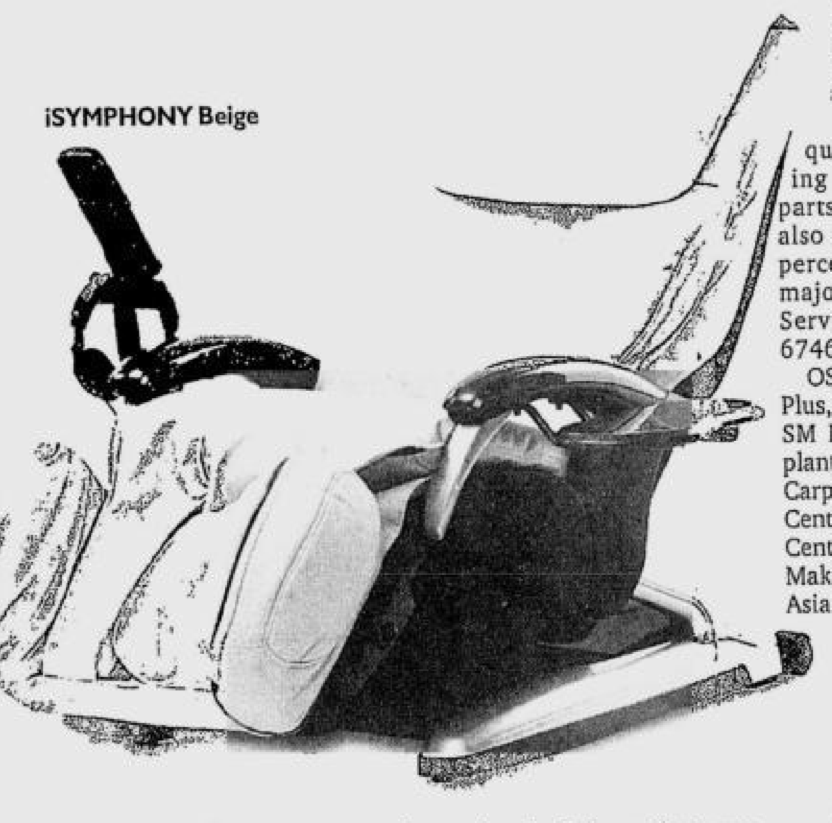
This intelligent massager comes with an arm massager to relieve fatigue from tired arms and a foot massager with specially equipped air bags that envelope the feet and nurse tired heels and soles by firmly massaging them and activating vital acupressure points along the bottom of the feet.

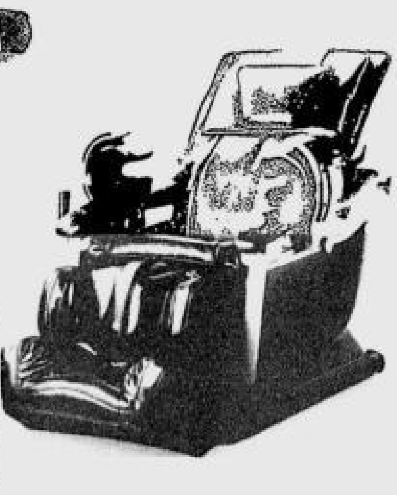
Recommended and endorsed by body therapy experts, the OSIM iDesire provides full-body healthcare from head to toe. The high quality and durable upholstery is coated with an Anti-Bacterial Coating to keep the surface hygienic for different users. Formerly available at P319,000, it is now available for P299,000.

OSIM guarantees the quality of its products by giving a full-year warranty on parts and service. Products are also available in 12 months 0 percent interest terms through major credit cards (Customer Service Hotline, 723-OSIM or 6746).

OSIM has branches at Health Plus, 5/F Podium Mall; GNC, G/F SM Mega Mall Bldg. A; Powerplant Mall; G/F Connecticut Carpark, Greenhills Shopping Center; Upper G/F, Alabang Town Center Expansion; 5/F Rustan's Makati; SM Cebu and SM Mall of Asia.

iSYMPHONY Beige





iDESIRE Chair

Non-invasive is in

From page C1

Armpits and jowls Botox

Botox, the immensely popular anti-wrinkle fix, is no longer just for smoothing the kinks on your skin.

Dr. Belo says Botox is now also being used to treat excessive sweating, and consequently eliminate body odor. Excessive sweating, she says, can result in bacteria, which cause body odor, and treating the condition with Botox is hitting two birds with one stone.

Iodine is applied on the armpit, after which it's dusted with talcum powder. The areas that retain the iodine's yellow color mean the sweatiest areas, and are then injected with Botox.

A single treatment costs P15,000, and is usually repeated after six months. Long-term effect rids the need for deodorants, according to Belo.

Another specialized use for Botox is facial reshaping, or achieving a smaller-looking face by injecting the Botox in the jowl area. It targets sagging jaws, and is also used to fix temporomandibular joint (or jaw joints) dysfunctions that result from teeth grinding. Like other Botox procedures, this is non-invasive and results in no downtime.

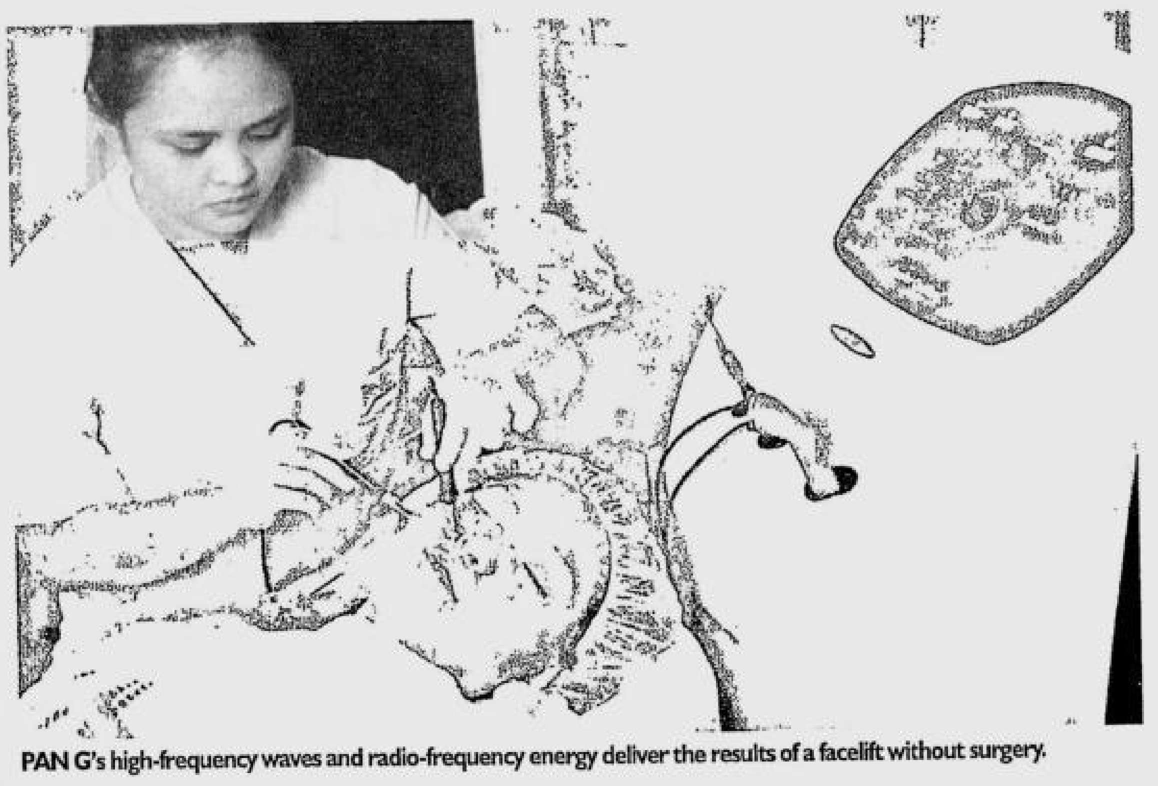
Botox of the jowls is done once a month for three consecutive months at P21,000 per visit.

Cryoslush

Belo clinic's exclusive Cryoslush is its version of a lunch-break facial, a procedure that uses liquid nitrogen to close pores to prevent acne, and to dry up zits.

Cryoslush is normally applied after the Belo Powerpeel, or the clinic's modern equivalent to the facial. Powerpeel is an exfoliation process that uses crystals, which the clinic claims to be more effective than the diamond-encrusted blades used by other establishments, as new crystals are used for each session, not just disinfected for the next patient.

A roll of cotton dipped in Cryoslush (P300/session) soothes and calms the skin post-Powerpeel, boosting blood circulation on the treated area.



PAN G's high-frequency waves and radio-frequency energy deliver the results of a facelift without surgery.

Before
After

THERMAGE studies reported gradual improvements on the treated area over 2-6 months after one session.

Eyelash transplant and eyebrow reconstruction

Transplanting hair on the eye area may sound intimidating and certainly doesn't fall under the non-surgical cosmetic category, but don't be surprised if this becomes the new cosmetic trend.

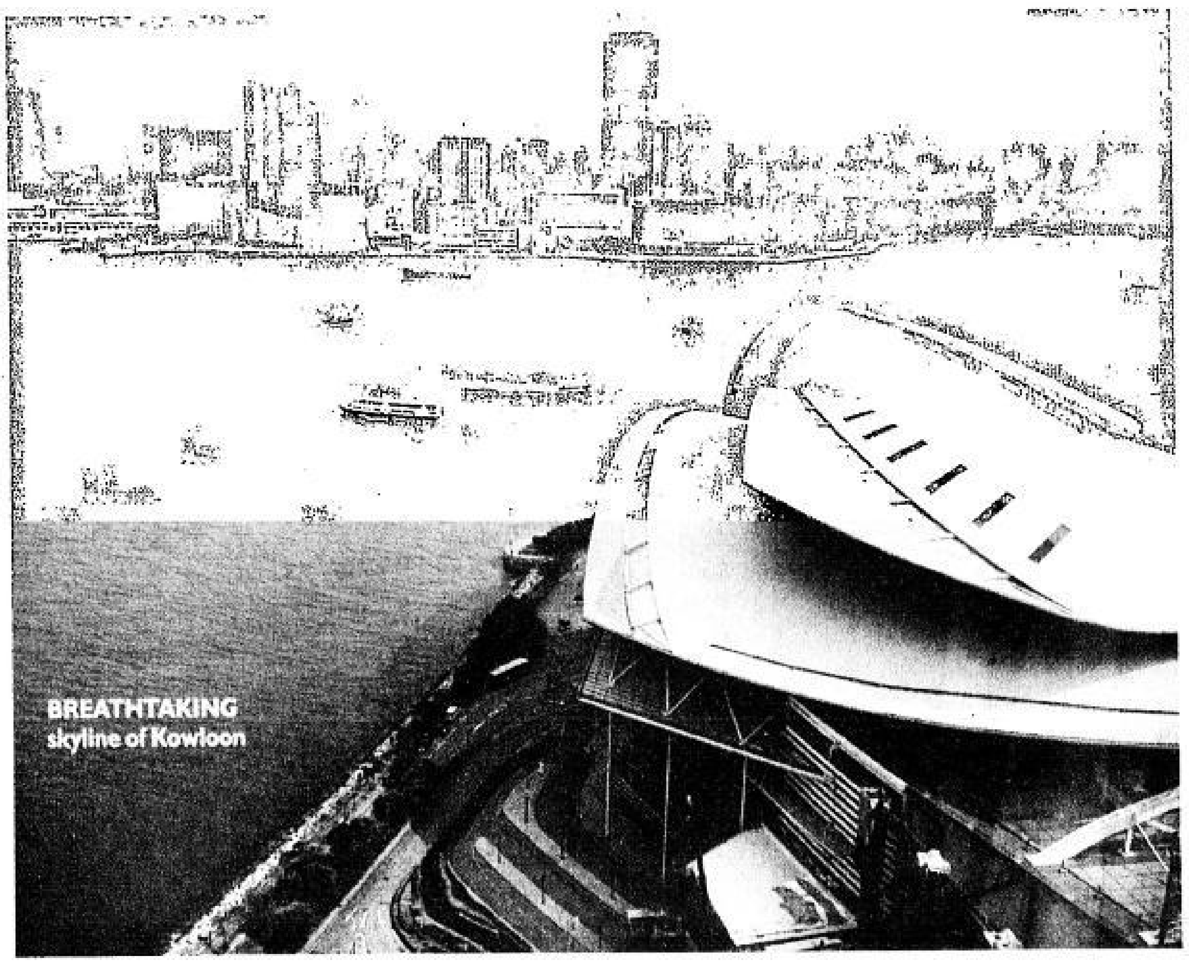
Already eyelash transplant and eyebrow reconstruction are being performed in her clinic, says Dr. Belo. These procedures are done under local anesthesia, and involve grafting hair from the patient's nape, which are then transplanted into the upper eyelid or eyebrow.

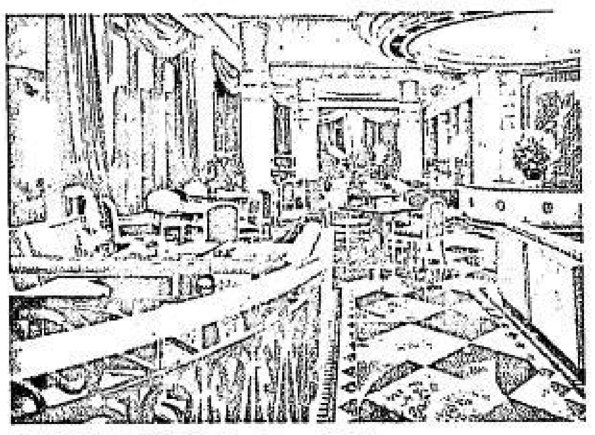
On the eyelids, 50-60 strands of hair are implanted. The procedure takes about an hour, with minimal bleeding in some patients, according to the clinic.

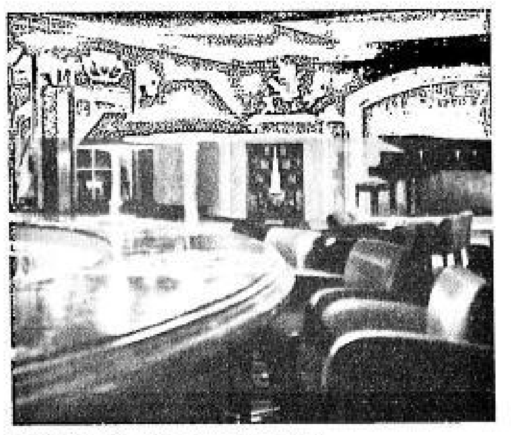
Patients with bald or patchy eyebrows, or those with scars in the brow area can resort to eyebrow reconstruction, which may require up to 600 single-hair grafts; about 90 percent of these survive. This may take several sessions depending on the severity of the case.

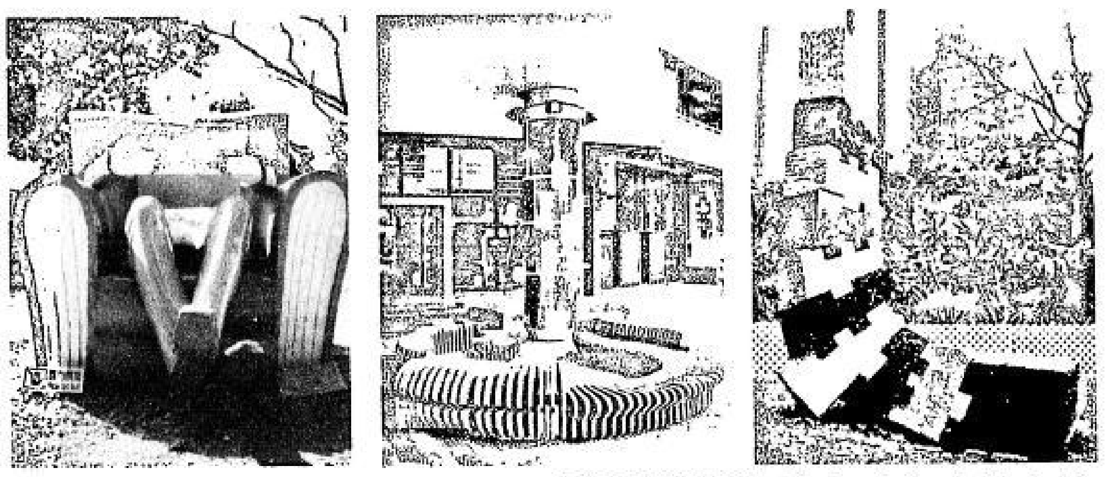
The rates range from P65,000 to P80,000.

The clinic says there's no visible scarring or tufting, and patients are satisfied with the results. The only downside is that, since they're hair from your head, they grow longer that your natural lashes and brow hair such that regular trimming will be necessary.


BREATHTAKING skyline of Kowloon


ONE-OF-A-KIND The Grand Club


SUPER chic Champagne Bar


EYE-CATCHING installations in front of the hotel

A grand tour of Hong Kong

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS IN FRANCE that took us to Paris, to the champagne region in Epernay, to the area where Henessy makes its cognac, and back to Paris, we returned to sizzling Manille, dahlings.

The last long weekend we had made me think about Boracay. But I knew it was going to be packed like a tin of sardines. Other resorts would also be jampacked.

So, without batting an eyelash, we chose Hong Kong. With HK's pleasantly cool weather in mind, we dashed to our Philippine Airlines flight and couldn't wait to arrive at the former British colony.

The grandest of hotels, the elegant Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, makes you feel like a grand persona. The minute you step out of the plane, you are greeted by a very able representative who does not leave your side till you clear immigration and customs.

Another hotel rep takes care of your luggage and escorts you to the waiting Hyatt limo and deposits you outside the hotel's gorgeous colossal lobby.

Another rep escorts you to the executive suite on the 34th floor, which has a breathtaking view of the harbor and the skyline of Kowloon.

Making sure we were treated grandly was Hyatt's magnum asset, the beautiful, smart, hardworking Ms with the 4Bs, **Corinna Chorengel**, no less, daughter of **Marla Yotoko** of Bacolod who writes children's books.

GRAND Hyatt's mega asset, adorable Gladis Young, marketing communications manager

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

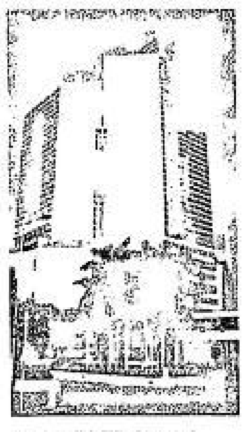
Before jetting to Manila for a breather, accompanied by her handsome businessman husband, she entrusted us into the capable hands of articulate, cyber smart **Gladys Young**, Hyatt's top marketing communications manager, who saw to it that we had a truly pleasant and enjoyable stay. We did, dahlings.

We took a short tour of the hotel, starting at the fabulous lobby that has the opulence of the 1930s, *palanggas*. The influence of high society and Art Deco is so evident. It looks like the grand salon of an ocean liner of that era, *palanggas*.

Offering a fab view of the harbor, it has colossal marble columns and Art Deco statuettes.

Next stop was the high-end Italian Grissini that has a casual-chic ambiance like an elegant New York restaurant. It is renowned for serving the best, authentic Italian cuisine.

Then we moved to a traditional Japanese restaurant, Kaetsu, *palanggas*. The range of their menu is incredible. Even the sake selection is so extensive, over 40 choices.


ELEGANT Grand Hyatt Hotel

MOI with Gladis Young and Grand Hyatt's London taxi-style shuttle

HOT group Drop Zone3 rocks the chic JJ's Club.

YOUNG international businessman Ricky Delgado and sister Lia D. Infante

GORGEOUS Carmen Delgado

Dinner with Zubiris

Later, we headed to the Peninsula to meet **Vicky** and Gov. **Joe Zubiri** for dinner at the popular Aqua Roma Restaurant at the top of a building three blocks away from the Pen.

The food was excellent, a choice between Italian and Japanese. Dinner talk was mostly about politics and the amount of seafood Joe Z. ordered. We all teased him about it. "I'm in Hong Kong to relax and eat well, so let me be," he said laughing.

After saying "goodbye" and "thank you" to Vicky and Joe Z. at the Pen, *moi* bumped into the gorgeous **Audrey Puckett C.** and husband, young taipan and lawyer **Aaron Chiu**, who is excited over his latest business venture. He is one of the owners of Hong Kong's latest *tres* chic night spots called Halo, where one gains entry by face value. Now, if that isn't exclusive, what is, *n'est ce pas?*

With the Chius was another young taipan, Cebu Pacific's brilliant hotshot **Lance Gokongwei** with his super nice wife **Mary Joyce Leong**.

Next morning we could hardly wait to have breakfast at Hyatt's The Grand Club, well-known for its panoramic view of the famous Victoria Harbor. The 29th to 36th are executive floors consisting of 84 rooms and 13 suites, and The Grand Club is on the 34th.

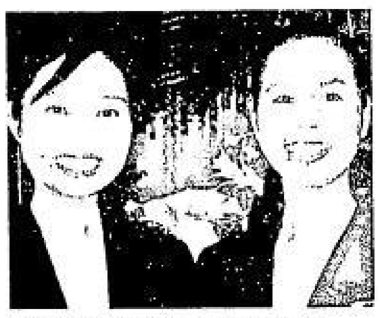
The excellent breakfast buffet is available 7-10 a.m. Evening cocktails are 5:30-7 p.m. with deluxe canapés and finger food and all the Moet & Chandon champagne and the best red and white wines you can drink. Coffee and tea are available throughout the day. All for free, dahlings. Not bad, huh?

At breakfast, *moi* bumped into the handsome and dashing business magnate **Ricky Delgado Sr.** who had just jetted in with his grandchildren and daughter **Lia** and her husband **Javy Infante**; his son, international businessman and *tres* eligible bachelor, good-looking **Ricky Delgado Jr.**; and daughter, attractive **Carmen**.

During cocktails later at The Grand Club, **Carmen D.** was with her steady boyfriend, brilliant, trilingual **Zachary McAfee**, son of **Linda Magsaysay Ho McAfee**, whose family now lives in Hong Kong again *après* several years of working in Shanghai.

New look of JJ

Saturday we had a couple of drinks at the stylish bar, Martinis, of the Mandarin Oriental at LandMark. Before calling it a night, we dropped by JJ's Club at the Grand Hyatt and listened to the fab sound of the Drop Zone3 band dishing out R&B and '80s sounds.

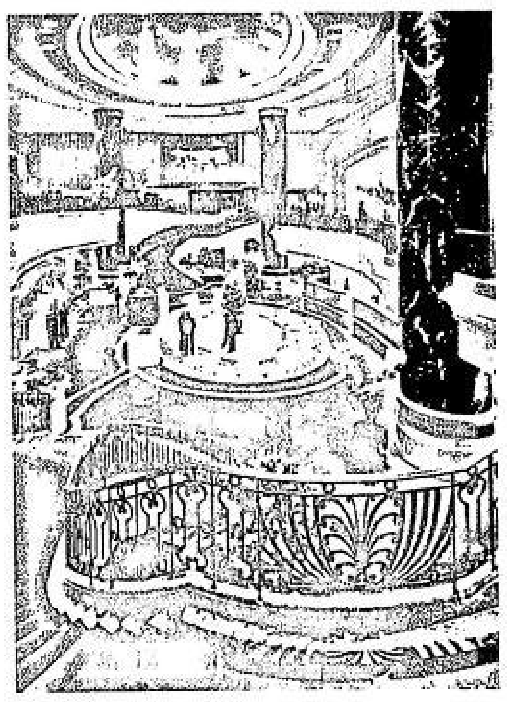

FANTASTIC The Grand Club waitresses—Caren Law of Hong Kong and our very own Cristina Hernandez of Bulacan

JJ's has a great new look. It is hotter than ever with its restaurant called Thai. Chef **Siriluck**, originally from Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok, serves authentic home-style Thai cuisine.

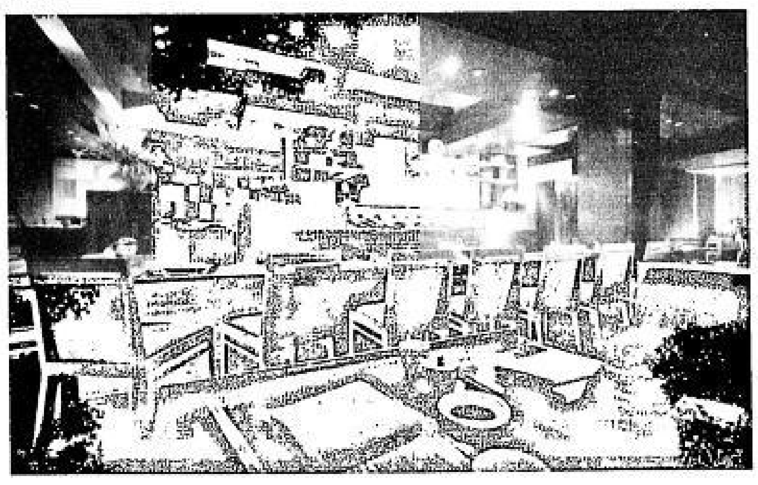
Next day we continued our tour of the Grand Hyatt hotel, taking a peek at two of 13 presidential suites, which have a bold Asian design with contemporary décor. Each suite is 3,064 sq ft of simple opulence. The Chairman suite blends contemporary and Chinese motifs, *palanggas*. I was told **Jiang Zemin** and **Bill Clinton** "felt very presidential in those suites."

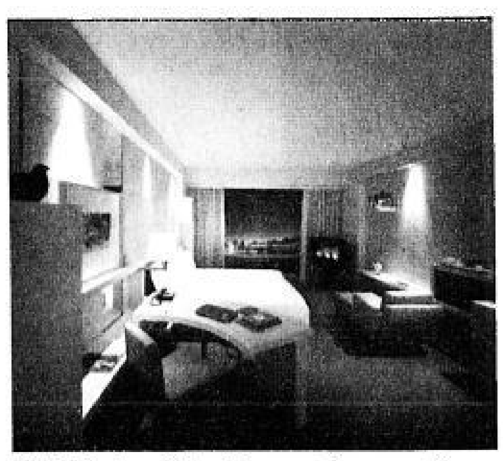
One of my favorite spots for shopping, or just window shopping, is Pacific Place. You are always likely to bump into friends. I saw **Dax Carlos**, son of **Vince Carlos**, who was with his pretty, pretty wife **Sheila Marie Dizon** and daughter **Maria Sofia Isabel**, who was promised a visit to Disneyland.

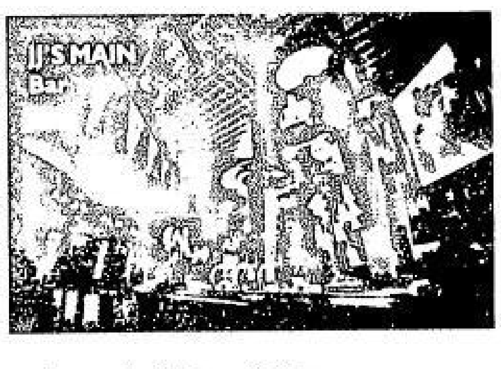
Exhausted and thirsty, we headed to Grand Hyatt's chi-chi Champagne Bar, dahlings, where you have a choice of more than 30 varieties of champagne. I asked which was the most popular and the barman answered, "Dom Perignon, Moet & Chandon and Veuve Clicquot" and other real expensive high-end labels.

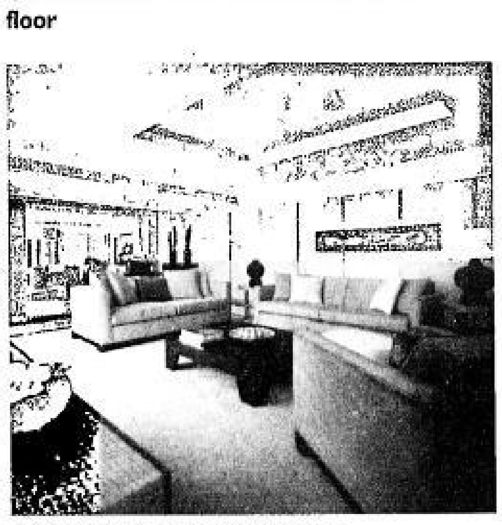

GRAND Hyatt's elegant lobby

THE HOTEL'S renowned Grissini Italian restaurant


JAPANESE resto Kaetsu has over 40 sake varieties.


OUR Harbour View Room at the executive floor




GORGEOUS presidential suite

There is also the Grill, an outdoor poolside resto on the 9th floor, and Tiffin, a tea lounge at the lobby area.

Hyatt's Chinese restaurant, One Harbour Road, is one of the most popular in Hong Kong. It combines the simplicity of Western design and authentic Cantonese cuisine. The décor resembles a taipan's house on Victoria Peak during the 1930s.

On our last evening, we went to a coffee shop with adorable Gladys as our hostess. The choice of food was incredible. After drinking all that wine and champagne and gorging on excellent food, *moi* decided to go back to my South Beach diet.

Gladys waved goodbye to us as the hotel's limo drove us to the airport for the flight home.

After our visit, we agree with Grand Hyatt's popular GM, **Gordon Fuller**, that the hotel is a "bridge to the elegance of the romantic past and a link to the sophistication of today and the exciting future."

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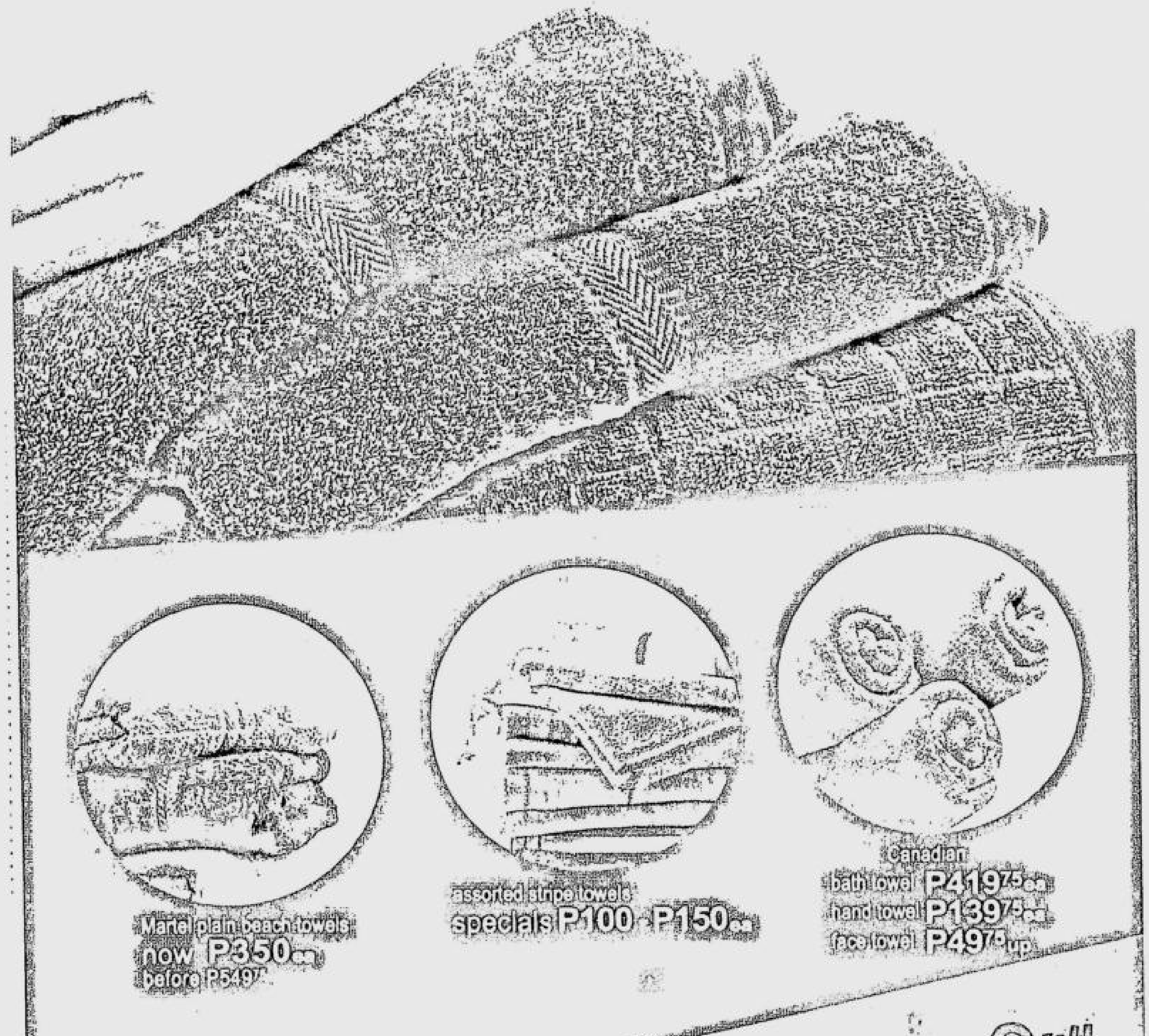

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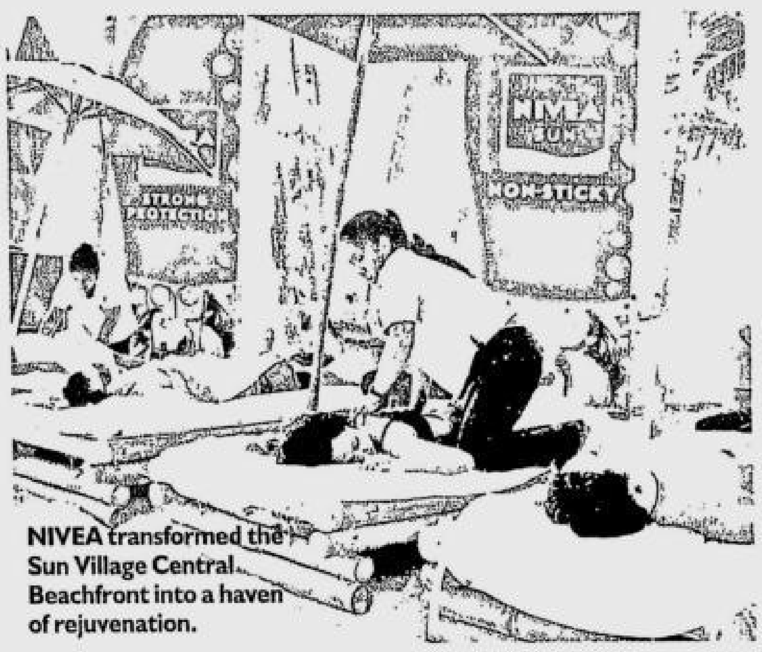


NIVEA transformed the Sun Village Central Beachfront into a haven of rejuvenation.

Sun lovers get ample protection

BORACAY SUN LOVERS WERE treated to another unforgettable summer at the Nivea Wellness Spa, an annual summer activity that has become a favorite with the island's regular visitors.

Nivea, the skincare expert, gave Boracay guests a chance to de-stress and experience the best pampering using its sun care products.

This year, Nivea transformed the Sun Village Central Beachfront into a haven of relaxation and rejuvenation.

Celebrities, who have made it a habit to visit Boracay during the dry season, dropped by to soothe themselves after a day on the beach.

They included movie personalities Wendell Ramos, Polo Ravales, John Estrada, and Keempee de Leon; model Andrew Wolfe and television personality Jeremy Marquez.

Beauties Bianca King, Michelle Madrigal, Ehra Madrigal, Tuesday Vargas and Miss Earth 2006 Priscilla Meirelles also visited the Nivea spa.

Visitors got a free massage using Nivea Body and Soul Oil for a minimum purchase of Nivea sun protection products, featuring a new non-sticky formula.

The products' exceptionally light formula is quickly absorbed leaving no greasy residue on the skin.

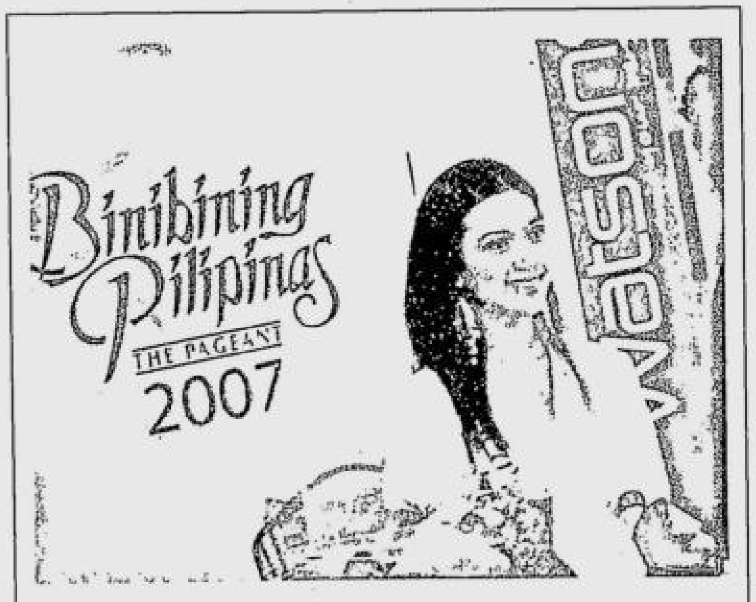
The products have highly effective UVA/UVB filtering to protect the skin from sunburn and aging.

Products available to Boracay visitors were Nivea Sun Sunblock Lotion SPF 50, Nivea Sun Whitening Lotion SPF 50, Nivea Sun Spray SPF 30 and Nivea Face Cream SPF 50, which were light on the skin and strong in protection.

Kids got the sun protection they needed from Nivea Children's Sunblock with SPF 50 and Nivea Children's Colored Spray SPF 40.

POLO Ravales

BIANCA King



BEAUTY KIT FIT FOR A QUEEN

WHEN SHE FLIES TO MEXICO CITY TO REPRESENT THE Philippines at the Miss Universe pageant on May 23, Anna Licaros will not be leaving home without her beauty kit. With the help of Watsons Your Personal Store, the Bb. Pilipinas Universe winner is also the Watsons Woman awardee and as such, has won P50,000 worth of Watsons beauty products and P50,000 pocket money.

"Watsons works hand in hand in showcasing not just a woman's looks but also her positive outlook in life," says Bobby Saneo, activation marketing manager of Watsons Philippines, the health and beauty chain that has become the first choice of Filipinos. With 167 outlets nationwide, Watsons offers the best line of products for beauty, personal care and hygiene.

After winning the Bb. Pilipinas Universe crown at the Araneta Center, Licaros rigorously prepared for what will be one of the most unforgettable moments of her life.

LIFESTYLE

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A lifetime choice of wellness

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Rudy Esperas

Model Tweetie de Leon keeps to a regime she has grown up with—keeping fit and being happy

KEEPING FIT AND HEALTHY has always been a way of life for fashion icon Tweetie de Leon-Gonzalez.

She started working out in the gym at 15. She played volleyball in high school. She rode a mountain bike in going to and from school. Then she went into scuba diving and swimming in college.

"I even engaged in boys' activities like climbing trees. Since I was already modeling at that time, I wanted to gain weight for I was very thin then," Tweetie says.

Now that she has a family of her own, Tweetie makes it a point to keep her passion for fitness alive by sharing it with her family—with hubby Mon Gonzalez and with children Sabina, 10; Lorenzo, 9; Nicolas, 7; and Alfonso, 2.

"It's not very difficult for my kids to be active because it's what they see in their parents," she says. "To live long enough for their sake has been my driving force in advocating a healthy lifestyle."

At present, Tweetie plays squash two hours a day, three times a week at Palms Country Club in Filinvest, QC. (Squash is a game for two or four persons, similar to badminton or racquets but played on a smaller court and with a racket having a round head and a long handle.) She also does abdominal exercises

A LIFETIME/ D2

TWEETIE de Leon-Gonzalez helps build awareness on health achieved through proper nutrition and exercise.

Your Doctor Knows Best

Priscilla B. Caguioa MD, FPCP, FPSMO

Question:

I am a smoker and have been coughing for almost a year now. How would I know if I have lung cancer?

Doctor Says...

(continuation from last week's column)

Lung cancer can only be diagnosed by a physician. Upon consultation, your doctor will get a detailed medical history and do a thorough physical examination. Certain diagnostic procedures and tests may also be done to determine if you have lung cancer. Your doctor may order imaging studies like chest x-ray that can reveal suspicious areas in the lungs that are probably cancerous or CT scan (specialized X-ray), which can help locate any abnormal mass or lesions undetected in conventional imaging procedures. He may also perform a bronchoscopy a small tube is inserted through the nose or mouth, down to the throat, to visualize the airways and lungs. During this procedure, a sample can be obtained for biopsy (a small tissue viewed and examined through a microscope to determine if the mass is cancerous or not). These are just few of the diagnostic techniques in evaluating lung cancer. Please consult your doctor for more information on these procedures.

There are many available treatment options for lung cancer. Treatment of lung cancer will vary depending on many factors such as lung cancer type, tumor size, location and extent of the tumor, and the patient's overall health condition. Surgical removal of the tumor is generally performed for cancer that has not spread beyond the lungs. Treatment may also include administration of drugs that stop the growth of cancer cells (chemotherapy) or using high-energy x-rays to kill dividing cells (radiation therapy). Surgical and medical treatment modalities can be given alone or in combination.

Treatment of lung cancer involves a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals. This team may include specialist doctors, surgeons, cancer specialists (oncologists), nurses, doctors specialising in tissue specimen analysis and diagnosis (histopathologists), occupational therapists, psychologists, dieticians and other healthcare professionals who are involved in caring for patients with cancer. As with other cancers, lung cancer treatment is intended to be curative (removal of cancer) or palliative (therapy that is unable to cure cancer but can reduce pain and suffering), depending on lung cancer stage. Quality of life should always be considered in the management of lung cancer. It is important that the patient and the patient's family actively participate in the treatment, together with the healthcare professionals in the cancer care team.

Early detection of lung cancer increases the chances of cure. If you are a smoker, stop smoking now. For proper guidance, evaluation, and management, please consult your doctor.

Dr. Caguioa is a Medical Oncologist/ Hematologist. She is an active consultant at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital. She holds clinics at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital and St. Luke's Medical Center. Dr. Caguioa is also an Associate Professor at the University of the Santo Tomas, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

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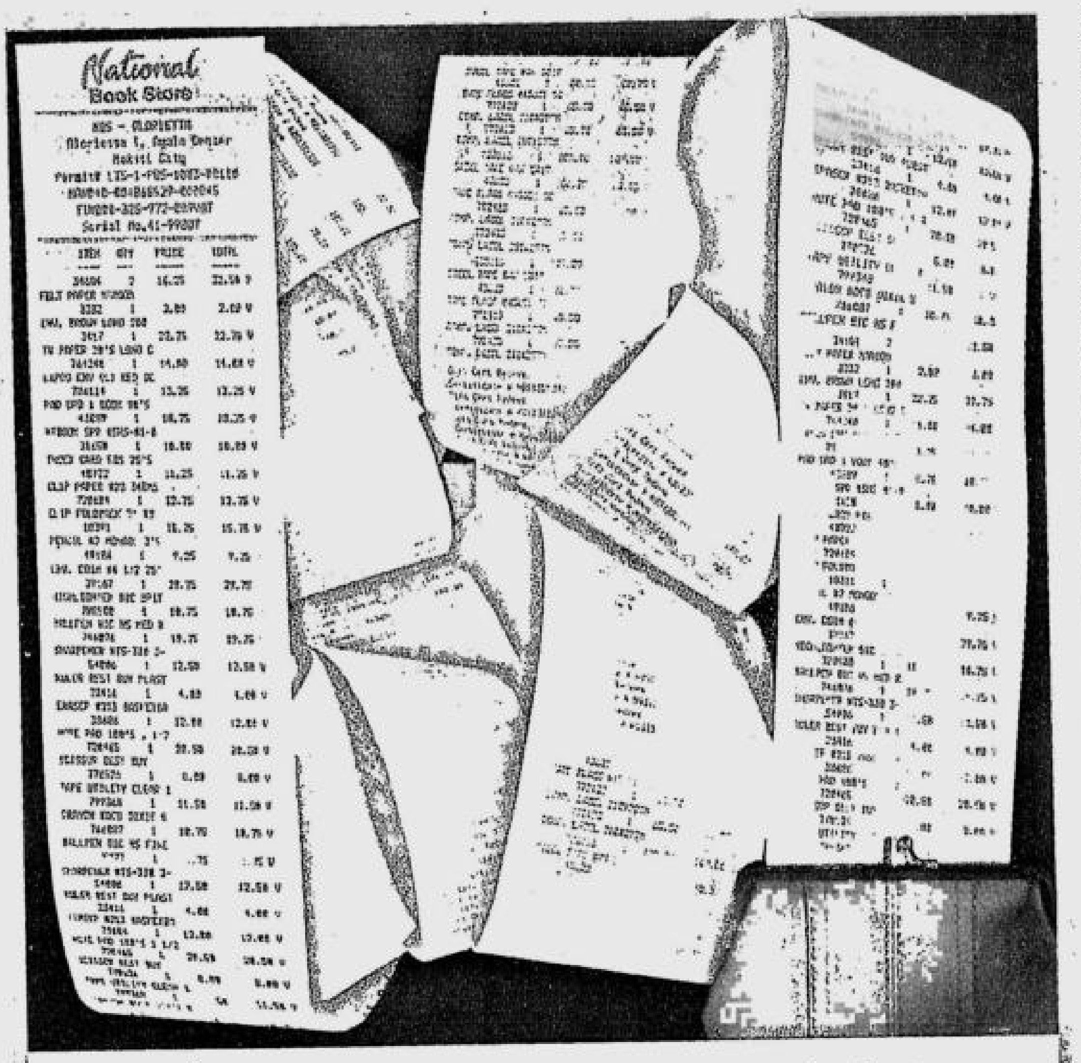

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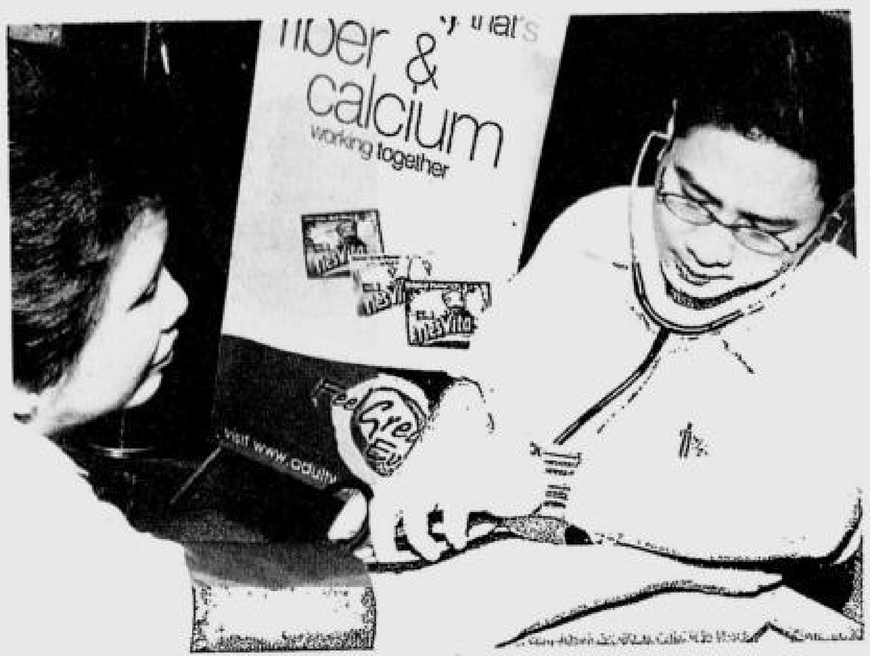
Kaya pagdating sa zero balance load situations, saan ka pa kundi sa leader in load innovations, SMART!

DAMI SMART TAYO

25,000,000 STRONG. 25,000,000 SMART

"HEALTHY lifestyle is a must for wholeness."



AT NESVITA booths, mallgoers can have their blood pressure checked.

OR PAMPER themselves with a relaxing massage

A lifetime choice of wellness

From page D1

and yoga and goes to the gym for cardio training together with Mon.

"Before, I was crazy about Tae Bo, which I did twice a day, three times a week," Tweetie says. "But my instructor left, so now my squash takes care of my cardio needs."

The model and mom even took plyometrics, an intensive three-month program for athletes, with her husband.

Mon, on the other hand, loves to play basketball four times a week with his friends. Sabina plays badminton while Lorenzo and Nicolas are into tae kwon do and basketball.

When it comes to nutrition, Tweetie makes sure that she and her family have a balanced meal of meat, fish and veggies everyday and a daily dose of health supplements. And she doesn't diet. "It's just a matter of controlling your food intake," she says.

Achieving wellness

At 40, Tweetie wears a number of hats. She has her own business of designing and manufacturing jewelry for local retail and export. She does volunteer work for the World Wildlife Fund. Sometimes, she goes to Cebu to teach modeling at the FTV ModelSchool Philippines.

To do all these and still look as relaxed and cool as she does, Tweetie tries to achieve wellness. "Wellness is wholeness. It's being able to cope with the challenges of daily life and extricate yourself from the madness around you. And I'm quite organized as far as my schedule is concerned."

In her TV and print advertisements, Tweetie appears to have very little makeup on. In person, her face is scrubbed clean. What's in her beauty kit? "Lip gloss, lip balm, liquid eyeliner, compact mirror, rosary and dental floss."

To balance her busy days, Tweetie sets aside quiet time for herself. "I meditate either late in the day or early in the day. It's my moment of prayer."

TRINA Abola, Nesvita consumer marketing head

With such enthusiasm for a healthy lifestyle, Tweetie has been tapped by Nestle to be the face of its Choose Wellness campaign, which is aimed at building awareness on health achieved through proper nutrition and physical activity.

She will grace the Nesvita Adult Wellness Tour which will be held at Robinsons Lipa, June 2-3; SM Baguio, June 16-17; Robinsons Place Manila, July 7-8; Robinsons Metroeast, Aug. 4-5; NCCC Mall Davao, Aug. 11-12; and Glorietta, Sept. 15-16.

"We're holding the tour to help educate mallers on the simple ways by which they can achieve total health and physical wellness," says Trina Abola, Nesvita consumer marketing team leader.

"We're targeting five specific areas which affect an individual's physical and emotional state—heart health, bone health, digestive health, weight management and everyday energy. We'll be addressing them through the booths we set up."

As Nestle's ambassador of wellness, Tweetie says she's "perfect for the job. It's not just a role I have to play because it's my lifestyle."

But being ambassador is also "quite a challenge." "Even if I was not given such title, I still feel it's my duty as a mother and an individual to inspire people to adopt a healthy lifestyle," she says.

Guarding her health is indeed a lifetime job for Tweetie. It's a job which is worth doing well for it has allowed her to live each day with joy and contentment.

A CHANCE for busy individuals to de-stress

ASPIRING young dancers are all too eager to discover [illegible] flamenco, an interactive [illegible]

Flamenco captivates even the young

IF YOU THINK LITTLE ONES are not sophisticated enough to appreciate the percussive rhythm of a world beat like flamenco, think again.

Clara Ramona's infectious passion and expertise in the dance obviously inspired pastel-clad tykes who attended the flamenco masterclass held recently at Perry Sevidal's ballet school.

The girls shuffled in their flamenco skirts and practice shoes under the watchful eyes of their teacher. The class aimed to instill cultural awareness in a younger generation, giving them an opportunity to explore and learn a new dance form.

The aspiring young dancers were eager to discover the expressive possibilities of flamenco, an interactive fusion of movement and music.

They presented the various elements making up flamenco, from the fluttering hand and arm movements of the *brazeo*, the haughty stamping beats of the *taconeo*, the grace of the *vueltas*, and the basics of the flamenco art of hand clapping, *palmas*.

More than the basics, learning flamenco allowed the children to broaden their movement range, heighten their rhythmic awareness and visually integrate emotion into the dance.

Ramona demonstrated the fundamentals of the castanets and displayed some fancy footwork. The class then gave a spirited interpretation of the Rumba Flamenca and Tanguillo, which brought together the various steps they learned.

As directress of the Clara Ramona Centro de Danza Flamenca, Ramona continually underscores the beauty and mystique of Spain's most celebrated dance form.

For the Philippines, which has deep cultural ties with Spain, flamenco becomes an interesting and fascinating exploration of music, rhythm and dance.

Hoping to discover and mold world-class performers, Ramona's school offers regular classes locally and workshops abroad.

This year, the school is offering summer workshops until June 2. The Clara Ramona Centro de Danza Flamenca studio is at 5917 Algier St., Poblacion, Makati City (parallel to Rockwell Drive); tel. 8991346, 0915-4345789; e-mail info@clararamona.com; and web site www.clararamona.com.

Pure fruit juice not likely to add weight on kids

NEW YORK—CONTRARY TO popular belief, drinking pure 100 percent fruit juice does not make young children overweight or at risk for becoming overweight, new research shows. Pure fruit juice provides essential nutrients and, in moderation, may actually help children maintain a healthy weight.

Inconsistent research findings have led to continued debate over the potential associations between drinking 100 percent fruit juice, nutrient intake, and overweight in children.

In a study, researchers analyzed the juice consumption of 3,618 children aged 2 to 11 using data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.

"The bottom line is that 100 percent juice consumption is a valuable contributor of nutrients in children's diet and it does not have an association with being overweight," study chief Dr. Theresa Nicklas, a child nutrition specialist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, told Reuters Health. She presented the new data at the Pediatric Academic Societies' annual convention in Toronto this week.

"If you look at the weight of the evidence there are at least seven studies plus the one I presented (this week) that show no association between 100 percent juice and overweight among children," Nicklas added. Even among the children who consumed the most juice, there was no association with the children being overweight or at risk for overweight, she said.

The results also indicate that juice consumption "is not excessive among 2- to 11-year-olds," Nicklas said. In fact, 57 percent of the children did not consume 100 percent juice at all, "which is much higher than I expected," she said.

The average daily consumption of pure fruit juice in the study population was 4.1 ounces (about half a cup)—an amount in line with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. And while there were a few children (13 percent) who consumed larger amounts of juice (12 ounces or more), their increased intake was not associated with overweight or at risk for being overweight. In fact, children in the 2 to 3-year-old category who drank the most juice were nearly three times less likely to be overweight or at risk for overweight than children who drank no juice at all.

Nicklas and her colleagues also found that children who drank any amount of 100 percent juice ate less total fat, saturated fat, sodium, added sugars and added fats. Pure juice drinkers also had higher intakes of a number of key nutrients including vitamin C, potassium, magnesium, folate, vitamin B6 and iron. They also ate more whole fruits, like apples. Nicklas encourages parents who are concerned about their child being overweight to look beyond their juice consumption.

"My advice would be to look at the total number of calories that child is taking in and look at where the bulk of those calories are coming from and equally important, look at the activity level of the child."

Reuters

Helping mom give her baby the best

BREAST MILK IS AND WILL always be the best for babies.

Countless scientific studies have already established the numerous health benefits of breast milk for babies and mothers.

Breast milk has the nutrients in the right amount needed by infants like colostrum that contains antibodies to help babies fight infections.

Breastfeeding helps mothers bond with their babies. Moms who breastfeed also lose much more quickly the extra pounds gained during pregnancy.

Breastfeeding also saves money. It is convenient and safe. Even milk expressed from the mother's breast is safe for babies up to eight hours.

This will allow mothers, especially those who are working, to give their babies all the benefits of breast milk even if they are away from home.

Avent, the world's leading infant feeding brand, helps women who cannot breastfeed all the time make sure their babies are still able to get all the benefits of breast milk.

Avent's wide range of products are especially designed to make breastfeeding a fuss-free experience. The products include bottles and nipples specially designed to reduce colic, allowing mothers to combine breast and bottle feeding with ease.

Avent also has a wide selection of gentle breast pumps designed to meet the individual needs of women, whether they need only to express milk or store it.

The Isis iQ Duo is an electronic breast pump that combines the soft petal massager and fingertip sensitive control of the original Isis manual pump with the speed and effortlessness of an electric pump. The twin pump also allows mothers to express milk from both breasts simultaneously.

BREASTFEEDING helps mothers bond with their babies.

Pumped breast milk can be stored in Avent storage sets and given to babies using Avent feeding bottles, which have naturally shaped nipples to make babies feel they are still suckling from their mothers' breasts.

Avent also has other electronic and manual breast pumps, as well as other accessories designed to make breastfeeding easy and convenient. Other Avent products include training cups and feeding sets, and even carriers, warmers and sterilizers.

Avent (www.avent.com) products are available at the infant section of department stores, specialty stores and hypermarkets.

Proper child development for healthy adulthood

STUDIES SHOW THAT A BABY'S MENTAL, physical and emotional health affects the kind of person he becomes as an adult.

Ability to learn, for one, is largely affected by the quantity and quality of sleep the baby gets.

Adequate and comfortable sleep makes the brain more capable of learning and retaining memory.

Psychologist Geraldine Dawson of the University of Washington says "very early in life there are these periods when certain parts of the brain are being wired and later in life these patterns will be very difficult to change."

When caring for a child, parents are also laying the foundation for his/her future.

There are some things parents can do to promote the proper development of their child.

For a smart baby: A baby's rapid brain development takes place in the first three years. During this time, simulation and interaction are very important. The baby is trying to learn about the world.

Parents can talk to the baby, play music and sing to him/her, show pictures, and take him/her to places.

Let the baby smell, hear, touch and see a variety of sounds, shapes and colors. Integrate designs and colors in everyday objects.

For a healthy baby: Sleep is not just beneficial for a baby's mental health but also for physical development. Studies show that interruption of deep sleep may lead to anatomical/respiratory deficiencies.

But babies do not sleep as deeply as adults. They take longer to go to sleep and are more vulnerable to night waking because of hunger or a wet diaper, among others.

For a happy baby: Babies do not really feel any real emotion until 6-8 months of age. Before that, cries and other sounds they make are meant to communicate if they are distressed or uncomfortable.

The New Drypers diaper has an attractive and colorful design. The super absorbent core is less prone to sagging or breaking when wet, keeping baby drier. The stretchable elastic waistband fits snugly and comfortably reducing back leaks to help babies sleep soundly.

With 100 percent cloth-like breathable cover, the diaper lets trapped air escape keeping the baby's skin cool and fresh while preventing rashes and irritations.

Drypers diapers are available in leading supermarkets.

Art of Living workshops

YOGA exercise is a feature of the Art of Living Part 1 course.

THE ART OF LIVING Part 1 course, May 21-26, will feature yoga, stretching and relaxation exercises.

The morning session, 9 a.m.-12 nn, will be held at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park. The evening session, 6:30-9:30 p.m., is at Urdaneta Village Park, Friendship Hall, Makati City.

The two groups will be combined on the last day of the course, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at Santuario de San Antonio.

Art Excel for ages 6-13 years, May 31-June 3, is an All Around Training in Excellence course for youngsters that aims to give proper direction to children's enthusiasm and creativity. It will be held 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in Makati. Venue will be announced after registration.

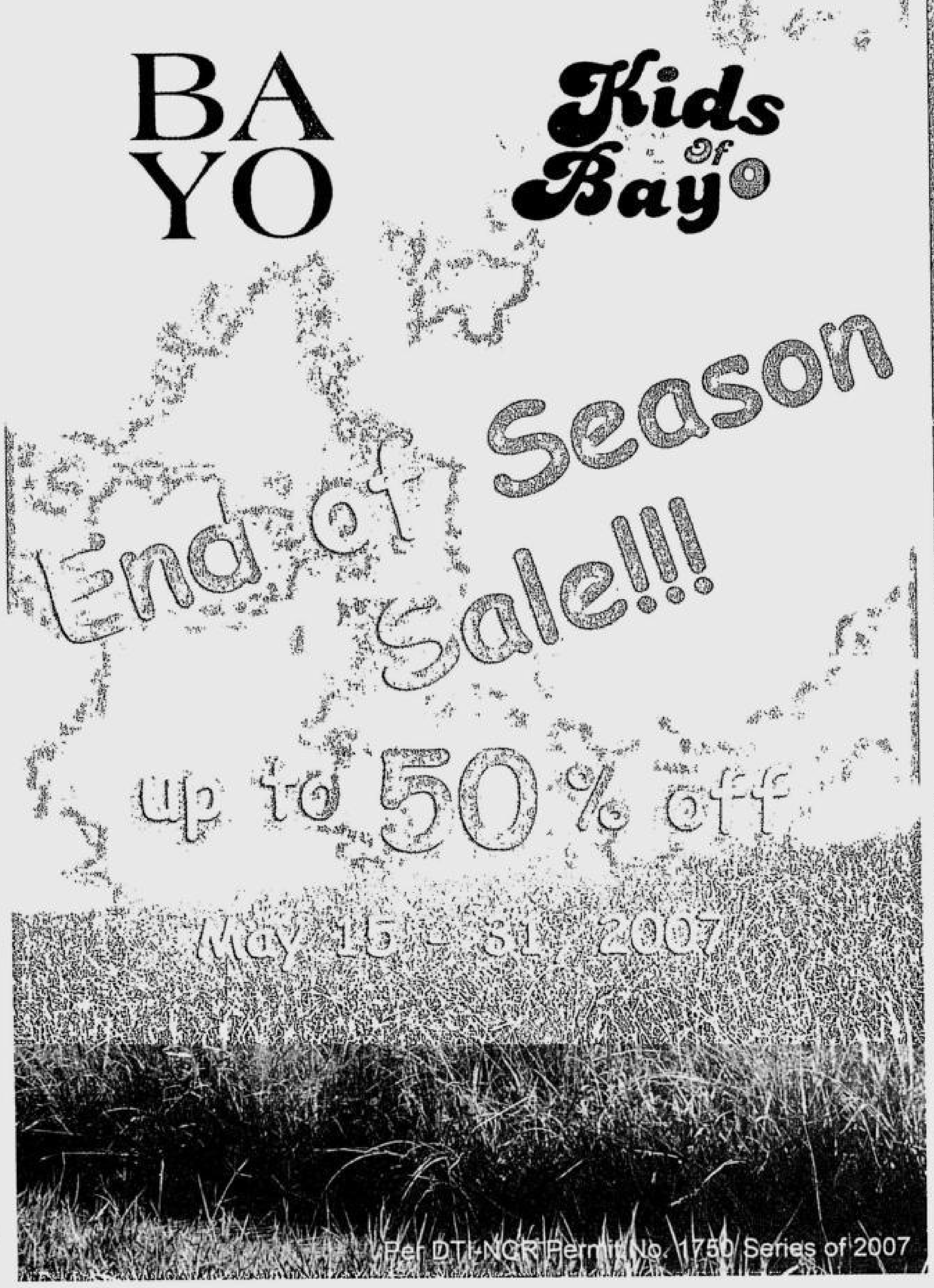
The Youth Empowerment Seminar (Y.E.S.!) for ages 14-17, May 31-June 3, encourages balance in teenagers' lives at the physical, emotional and spiritual levels. Scheduled for 2:45-7:15 p.m., Y.E.S.! will be held in Makati. Venue will be announced after registration.

To inquire or register for Art of Living, e-mail info@artofliving.org.ph or call 817-8642. Registration must be made on or before May 16 to guarantee a slot in the May 21 course. To know more about the Art of Living workshops visit www.artofliving.org.ph.

For Art Excel and Y.E.S.! courses, call or text Bhavna Paryani at 0917-9774235 or text AOL <your name> <message> to 2920 (Globe and Smart only). Registration by e-mail (info@artofliving.org.ph) or fax (817-6642) must be made on or before May 23.

STRETCHING to clear the lungs

LEARNING to balance and relax the mind



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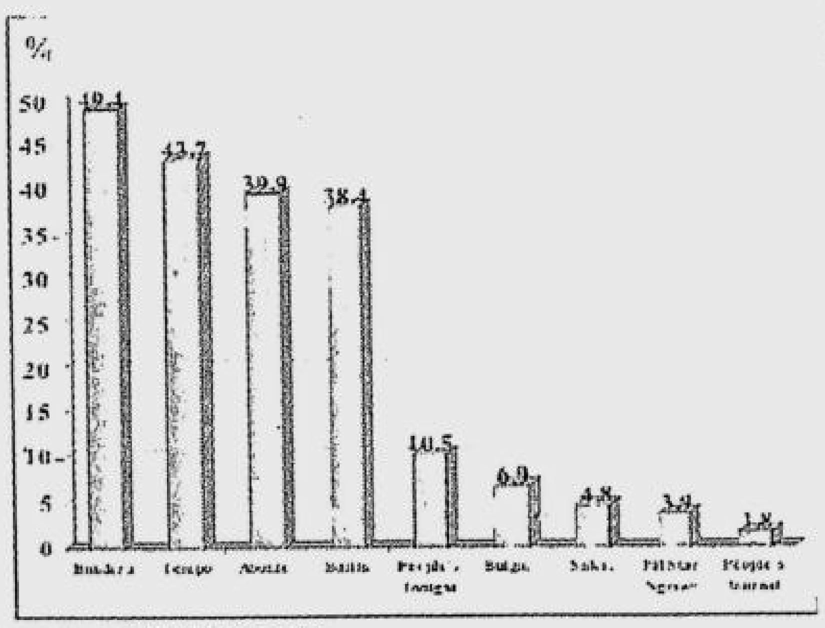
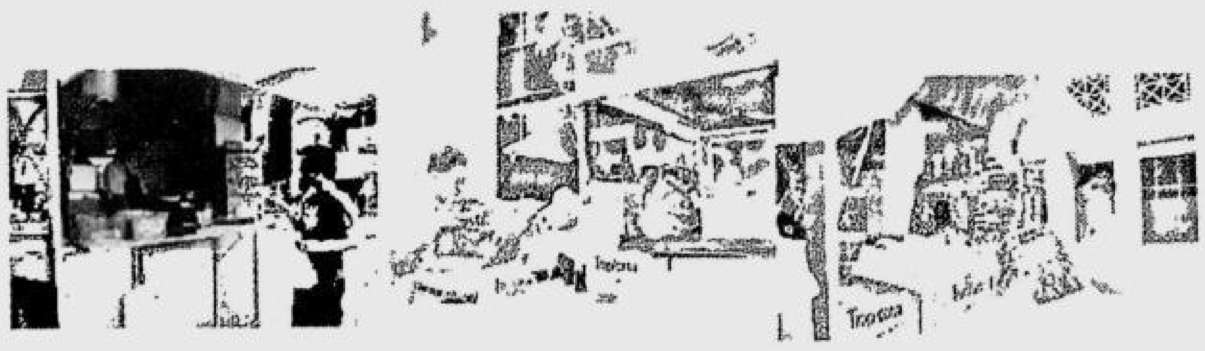


Source: AC Nielsen Media Index 2006

Based on the 2006 survey of AC Nielsen Media Research, Bandera maintains its rank as the No.1 tabloid in Mindanao.

Bandera, a newspaper published by the Inquirer group of companies, enjoys a wide appeal among the masses particularly the working class, small scale entrepreneurs, housewives and people who are in transit.

Reach this market through Bandera. Contact our account executives at 895.1510 or 895.1467 to know more about our rates and special packages.



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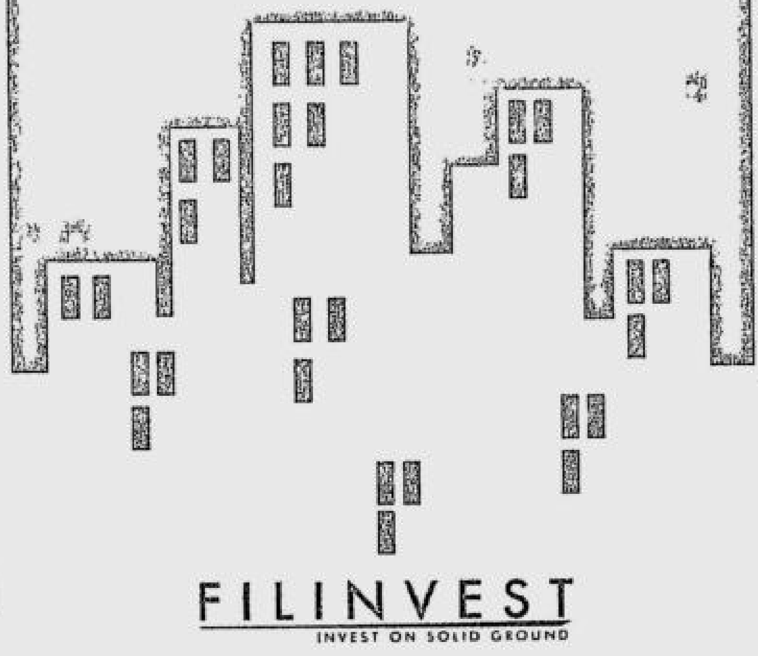

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INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Pursue wellness one step at a time

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ
May
June
July
Aug

AN EXPRESSION OFTEN HEARD FROM people who pursue a goal or set off on a journey or undertake a big task is "one step at a time."

In short, you cannot hurry a good thing if you want positive results. Especially if you choose the natural way. Here is definitive information that can help you along the path to wellness.

In healthy oils and illness

Did you know that the oil you use for cooking can cause damage to your body that will eventually lead to disease? This ought to scare you.

The culprit is long-chain triglycerides or LCT found in certain vegetable oils. Belonging to polyunsaturated oils (like soy), they may even block the efficient functioning of the thyroid gland. The result: hypothyroidism.

Chemical pollutants like pesticides, fluoride and mercury can take a heavy toll on the thyroid as well..

LCTs oxidize rapidly and become rancid. So, food manufacturers refine these oils resulting in the presence of trans-fatty acids that can have a negative effect on the body, most especially the thyroid.

The LCTs are deposited in cells as oxidized fat, thus, the body's ability to convert the thyroid hormone T4 to T3 (creating the enzymes needed to convert fats to energy) is impaired.

Moreover, polyunsaturated oils, which are long-chain fats, unlike medium chain oils, contribute to weight gain.

> Drink as much fresh vegetable juice as you can

When the breakdown occurs, one can develop symptoms typical of hypothyroidism. This is according to Dr. Ray Peat, a physiologist, in the book "The Coconut Diet" by Cherie Calbom/John Calbom.

Instead of just taking medication, it is imperative you check the underlying causes of low thyroid function. Note that some medication can lead to bone loss due to impairment of calcium absorption.

Nourish the body

Healthy oils that nourish the body include virgin coconut oil and extra virgin olive oil and, yes, believe it or not, butter (though it is best to take it sparingly).

Just two tablespoons of virgin coconut oil a day, whether taken pureed or mixed with your oatmeal juice or salad dressing, will do the following for you:

- stimulate weight loss
- normalize the thyroid function
- boost energy levels
- improve the quality of your skin/complexion
- reduce inflammation within the body (heart or any organ with inflammatory problem)
- control infection (because it is anti-viral/bacterial/microbial/fungal)

Lifestyle changes

Start the habit of juicing daily. In short, drink as much fresh vegetable juice as you can—cucumber, radish, celery, carrot, romaine lettuce, alfalfa sprouts, wheatgrass, etc. Make your own combination with apples, papaya, orange, coconut, water, etc. The more you juice, the better for you.

Beauty oil rub

No fuss, no extra expense, no complicated rituals. Get your favorite bottle of virgin coconut oil (try Pro Source). Drink two tablespoons daily of Extra Virgin Olive Oil.

If you want a prepared formula, try Cocozen by Cory Quirino, especially formulated by me (Watsons, Rose, Rx Pharmacy). Simply rub the oil all over your body from face to toe after your bath.

Do something to relax you like reading a book, listening to music, etc. Within 10 minutes the oil will be totally absorbed by your skin leaving an unbelievable moisturizing and dewy effect on your skin. This is one of my secrets I am now imparting to you.

Collect yourself

There are days you feel disjointed, fractured, right? So many parts of you are disconnected due to work overload and stress. Stop, in the name of love!

Show some affection for yourself by gathering all the parts of you and setting aside some quiet time. All you have to do is just close your eyes, breathe slowly, and listen to your silent heart speak. Just 15 minutes twice a day for starters. Feel whole again.

It is true that the sum is greater than its parts. If you are put together then, imagine how great you can be.

Love and light!

We'll tell you a story on why the first instant misua from Nissin doesn't taste like instant because we need more than a paragraph to explain to you that we didn't create it instantly.

It all started in 1910, when Momofuko Ando, the inventor of instant ramen and the founder of Nissin was born. Orphaned as a child and sternly raised by his grandfather, Mr. Ando transacted business as a give-and-take affair; that is, if you take too much and give too little in return, you end up killing the other person and losing everything.

Nissin was founded on this win-win principle.

Hunger brought out the inspiration.

In the spring of 1958, post-war Osaka had been reduced to ashes. There was little to eat; food lines stretched around dark street corners. It was here that Mr. Ando saw people dazed with hunger, on their feet for hours, all for a bowl of steaming ramen. In two years' time, he created and distributed the first instant ramen from his backyard.

What started out as neighborhood fare ended up as one of the world's favorite meals for hungry people who can't wait.

From then on, Mr. Ando never stopped, inventing Nissin Cup Noodles in 1971 and other technological innovations in the instant food industry—the latest being the first Space Ramen in 2006.

Now the same Japanese spirit of innovation is being used to make the first instant misua from Nissin—a proudly Pinoy noodle—in Cup Noodle format.

Nissin has achieved a fusion of Pinoy taste and Japanese technology.

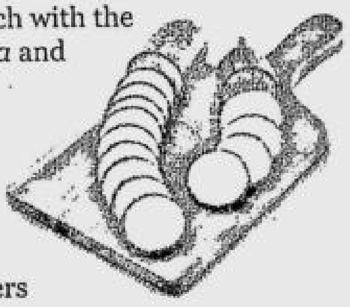
Distinctly Pinoy. Misua mismo.

We searched the local countryside, going as far as Batangas for the perfect misua. We tried everything from roadside eateries to gourmet restaurants—anything to capture this classic Pinoy rice noodle. We were looking for the right texture, thickness, color and the clean translucency of true misua.

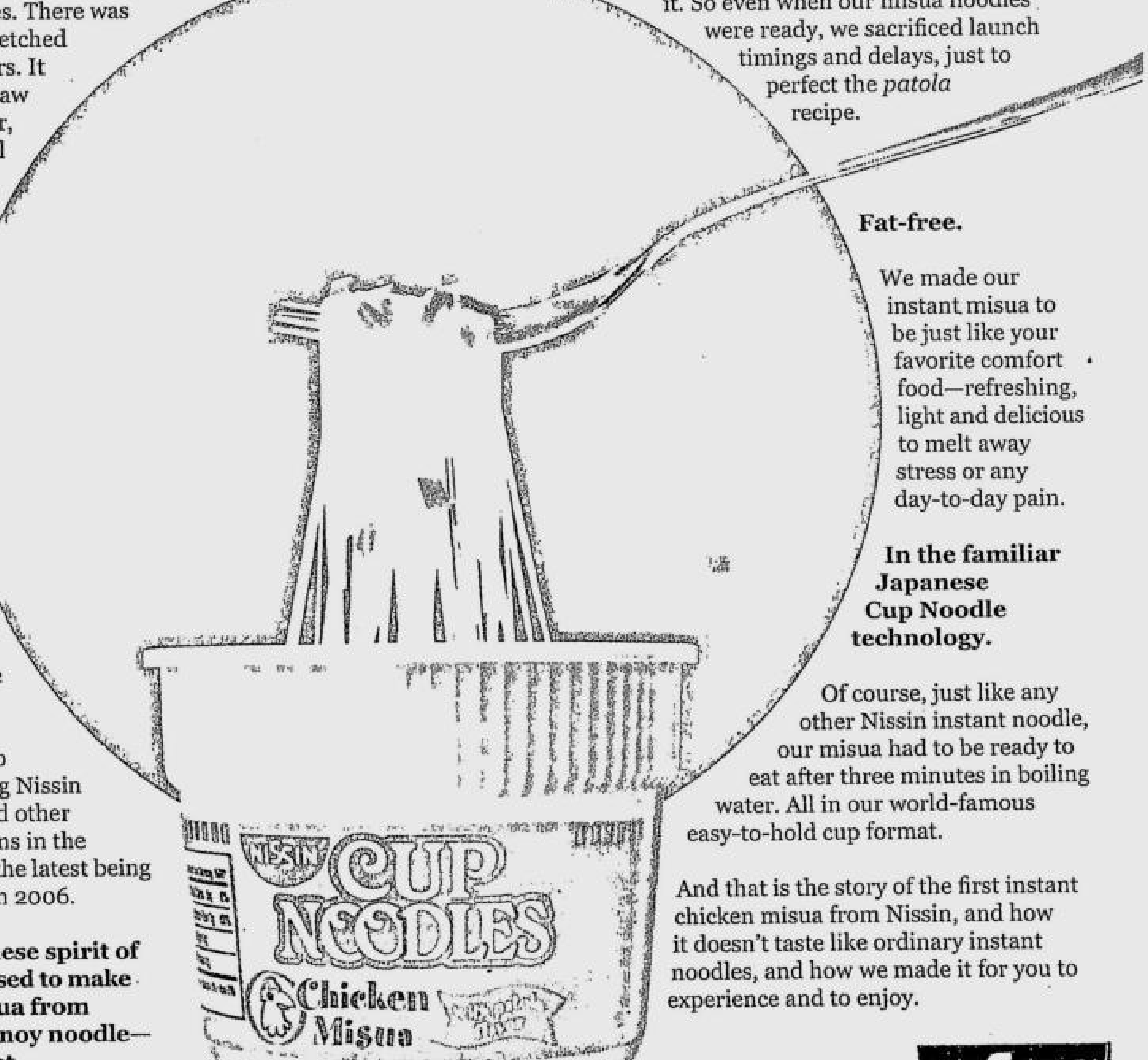
Chicken Misua for the soul.

Our mothers knew all along. There's nothing like chicken misua to calm a restless heart or to soothe an ailing soul. It has to be prepared with great love and care to be able to do this. That's why we didn't tamper much with the *sinaunang patola* and chicken mix.

Enhanced by *patola* flavor.



The traditional misua our mothers made always had *patola*—it would be incomplete without it. So even when our misua noodles were ready, we sacrificed launch timings and delays, just to perfect the *patola* recipe.



Fat-free.

We made our instant misua to be just like your favorite comfort food—refreshing, light and delicious to melt away stress or any day-to-day pain.

In the familiar Japanese Cup Noodle technology.

Of course, just like any other Nissin instant noodle, our misua had to be ready to eat after three minutes in boiling water. All in our world-famous easy-to-hold cup format.

And that is the story of the first instant chicken misua from Nissin, and how it doesn't taste like ordinary instant noodles, and how we made it for you to experience and to enjoy.

NISSIN™

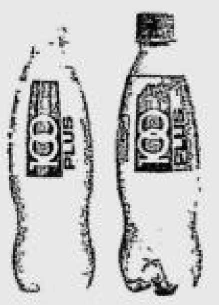
More than just a thirst-quencher

WHILE WATER IS ESSENTIAL TO life, there are actually instances when it may not be beneficial to the body.

During periods of intense physical activity, such as sports, exercise, workout, or plain repetitive and continuous movement, when body fluids are lost primarily through perspiration or urine, consuming too much water to quench thirst may upset the normal balance of electrolytes in the body.

The imbalance could interfere with the nervous system resulting in dizziness, nausea or headaches, among others.

To prevent electrolyte imbalance while quenching the thirst, it may be advisable to resort to isotonic liquids. Isotonic solutions are formulated with salts to achieve a composition similar to that in the normal cells of the body and bloodstream.



Drinking an isotonic solution allows rapid absorption of vital electrolytes and minerals.

100 Plus is a high-performance isotonic beverage designed for high-performance individuals. Its unique formulation provides five essential electrolytes and the minerals potassium, calcium, sodium, chloride, and phosphate to replace what the body loses through physical exertion.

100 Plus also provides carbohydrates for added energy. It has a lightly carbonated flavor that creates an invigorating sensation but has far less sugar content than other heavily carbonated beverages.

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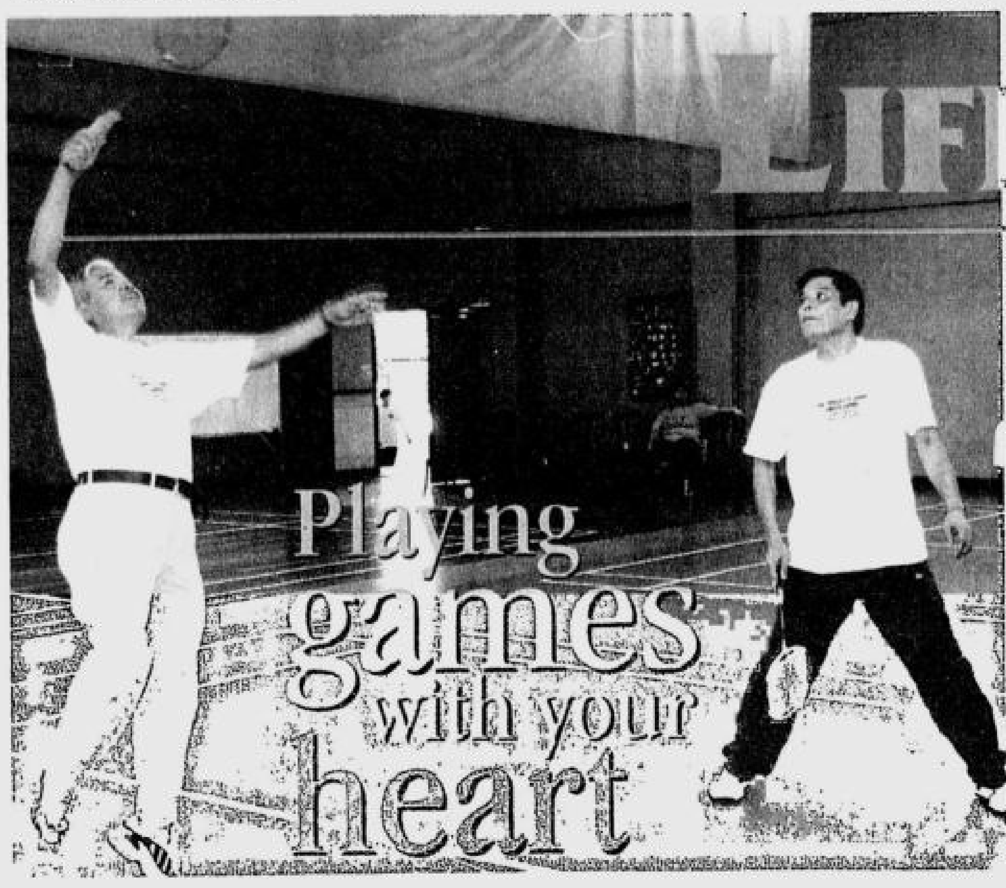


Playing games with your heart

ASIDE from table tennis, Tacardon also plays a mean game of badminton.

Men who have undergone angioplasty showed up at the Heart Health Games and proved there is no need to quit sports altogether

By Jessica Hermosa and Andrea Toledo
Contributors

IT IS SATURDAY MORNING. BERDINE Chan, 51, is playing badminton, while Rod Tan, 56, is shooting three-pointers at the basketball court next door. Meanwhile, Carlos Tacardon, 64, is downstairs paddling a mean game of table tennis.

What do these three men have in common apart from living active lifestyles past their 50s? These men had an angioplasty a year ago—angioplasty being a low-risk and minimally invasive procedure for treating coronary artery disease.

These three men and several other heart patients demonstrated at the Heart Health Games held recently how angioplasty is a viable option to save their hearts, get back on their feet and go on with their active lives.

The event was organized by the Philippine Society of Cardiac Catheterization and Interventions, Inc. (PSCCI) and sponsored by Boston Scientific, the worldwide developer of minimally invasive medical devices.

Before his angioplasty, Chan had been leading an active lifestyle—playing badminton as a competitive sport for many years already. Despite this, a check-up revealed that his chest pains were caused by an arterial blockage. An angioplasty and a passed Stress Test two months later, Chan says he has fully recovered and has not felt any recurrence of pain.

"*Mas lumakas pa nga siya* after the angioplasty," attests his wife Teresa.

Tacardon, a businessman, is also active playing golf again after his angioplasty.

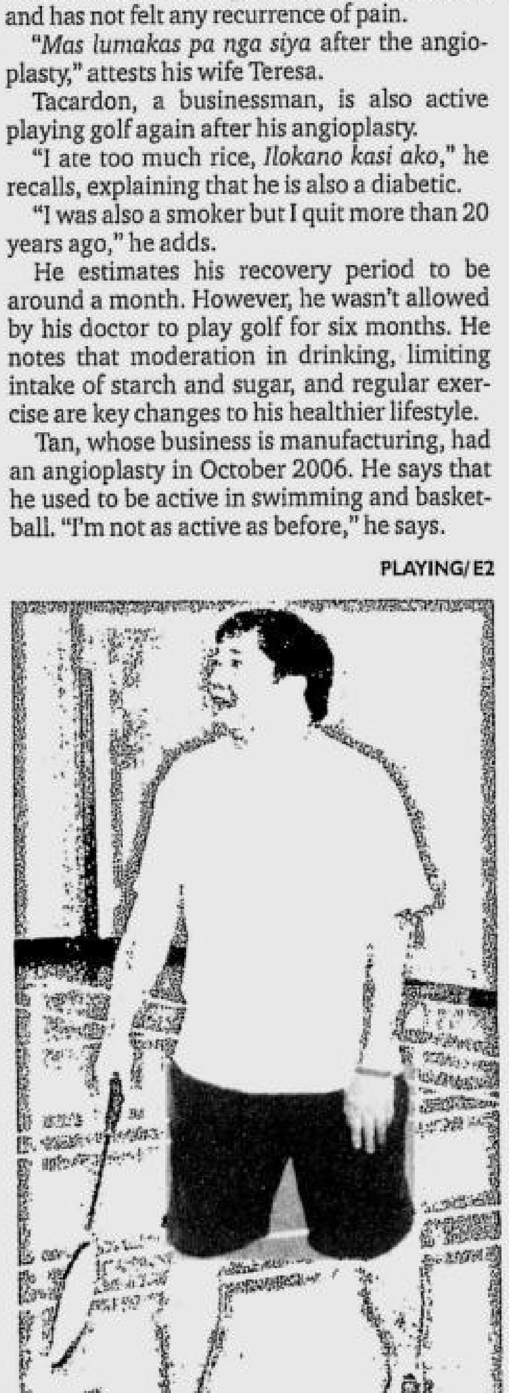
"I ate too much rice, *Ilokano kasi ako*," he recalls, explaining that he is also a diabetic.

"I was also a smoker but I quit more than 20 years ago," he adds.

He estimates his recovery period to be around a month. However, he wasn't allowed by his doctor to play golf for six months. He notes that moderation in drinking, limiting intake of starch and sugar, and regular exercise are key changes to his healthier lifestyle.

Tan, whose business is manufacturing, had an angioplasty in October 2006. He says that he used to be active in swimming and basketball. "I'm not as active as before," he says.

PLAYING/E2



HEART patients like Rod Tan, 56, took a Stress Test before getting the go-signal to play badminton and other sports.

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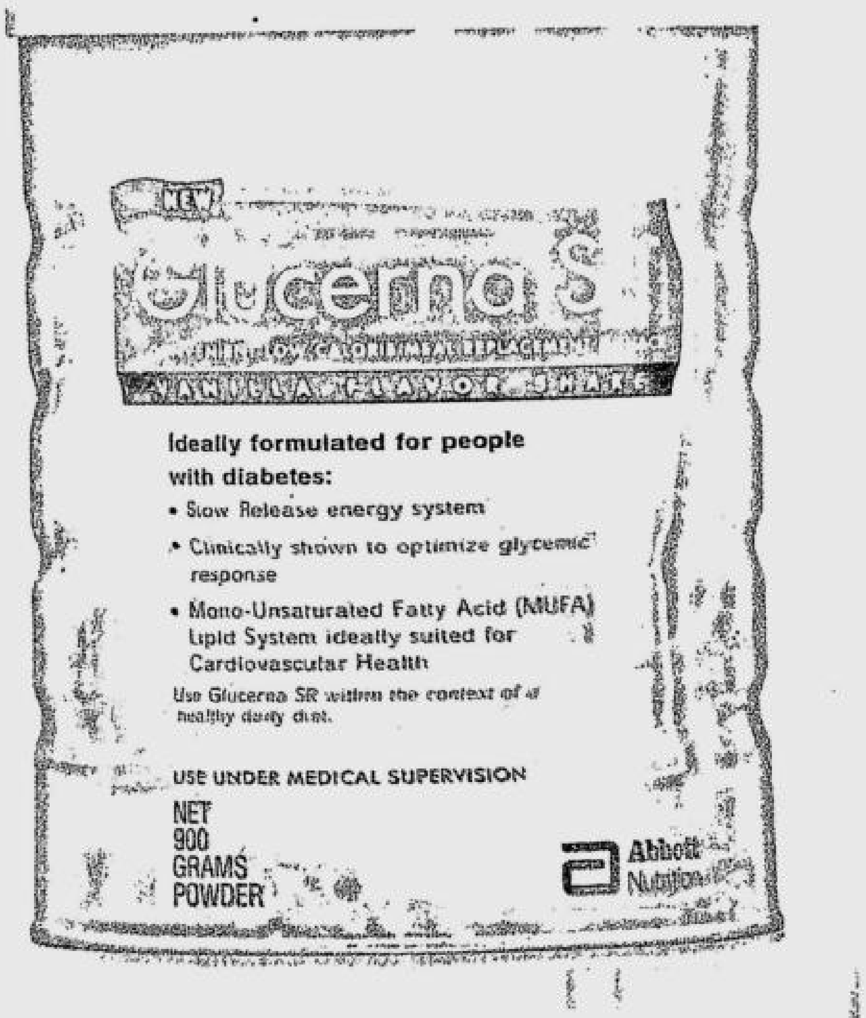
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USE UNDER MEDICAL SUPERVISION
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Clinically proven to help control blood sugar

MECHANICS:

1. For every purchase of Glucerna SR™ 400g or 900g at leading stores, consumers will have the opportunity to avail of a free Optium Xceed Glucose Meter and free Glucose Strips (pack of 50's).
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13. The cost for each successful message sent is P2.50 for Globe, Touch Mobile, Smart, Talk n Text, Addict Mobile and Infinity subscribers. For Sun Cellular subscribers, cost per text is P2.00.

Promo Period: April 25,2007 to Oct. 31, 2007

Glucerna SR™ is available in leading supermarkets, groceries, Mercury Drug stores and SM supermarkets nationwide.
Per DOH-BFAD Permit #0408, s 2007.

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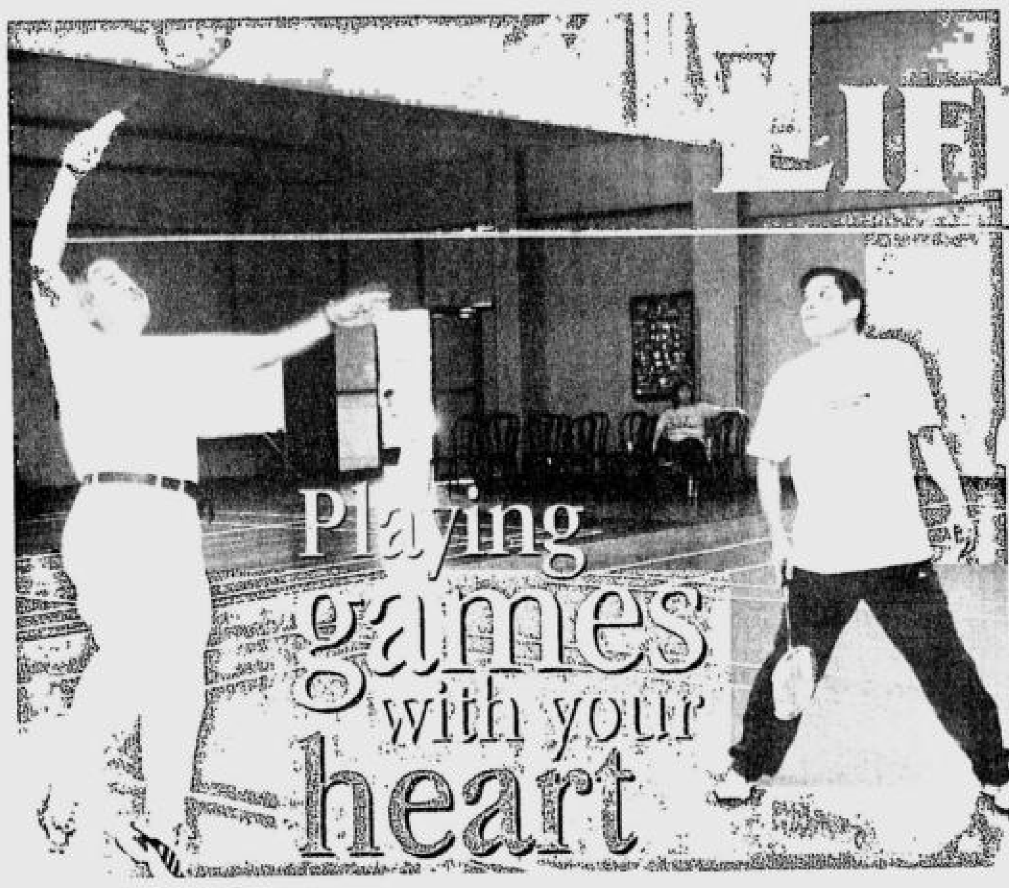

Playing games with your heart

ASIDE from table tennis, Tacardon also plays a mean game of badminton.

Men who have undergone angioplasty showed up at the Heart Health Games and proved there is no need to quit sports altogether

By Jessica Hermosa and Andrea Toledo
Contributors

IT IS SATURDAY MORNING. BERDINE Chan, 51, is playing badminton, while Rod Tan, 56, is shooting three-pointers at the basketball court next door. Meanwhile, Carlos Tacardon, 64, is downstairs paddling a mean game of table tennis.

What do these three men have in common apart from living active lifestyles past their 50s? These men had an angioplasty a year ago—angioplasty being a low-risk and minimally invasive procedure for treating coronary artery disease.

These three men and several other heart patients demonstrated at the Heart Health Games held recently how angioplasty is a viable option to save their hearts, get back on their feet and go on with their active lives.

The event was organized by the Philippine Society of Cardiac Catheterization and Interventions, Inc. (PSCCI) and sponsored by Boston Scientific, the worldwide developer of minimally invasive medical devices.

Before his angioplasty, Chan had been leading an active lifestyle—playing badminton as a competitive sport for many years already. Despite this, a check-up revealed that his chest pains were caused by an arterial blockage. An angioplasty and a passed Stress Test two months later, Chan says he has fully recovered and has not felt any recurrence of pain.

"*Mas lumakas pa nga siya* after the angioplasty," attests his wife Teresa.

Tacardon, a businessman, is also active playing golf again after his angioplasty.

"I ate too much rice, *Ilokano kasi ako*," he recalls, explaining that he is also a diabetic.

"I was also a smoker but I quit more than 20 years ago," he adds.

He estimates his recovery period to be around a month. However, he wasn't allowed by his doctor to play golf for six months. He notes that moderation in drinking, limiting intake of starch and sugar, and regular exercise are key changes to his healthier lifestyle.

Tan, whose business is manufacturing, had an angioplasty in October 2006. He says that he used to be active in swimming and basketball. "I'm not as active as before," he says.

PLAYING/ E2

HEART patients like Rod Tan, 56, took a Stress Test before getting the go-signal to play badminton and other sports.

Chin Chin Gutierrez

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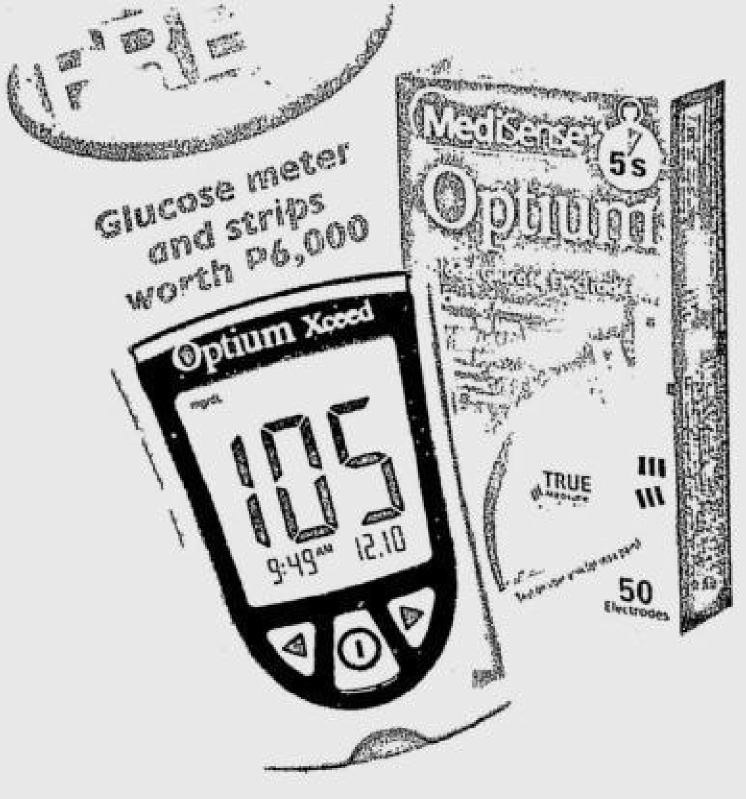

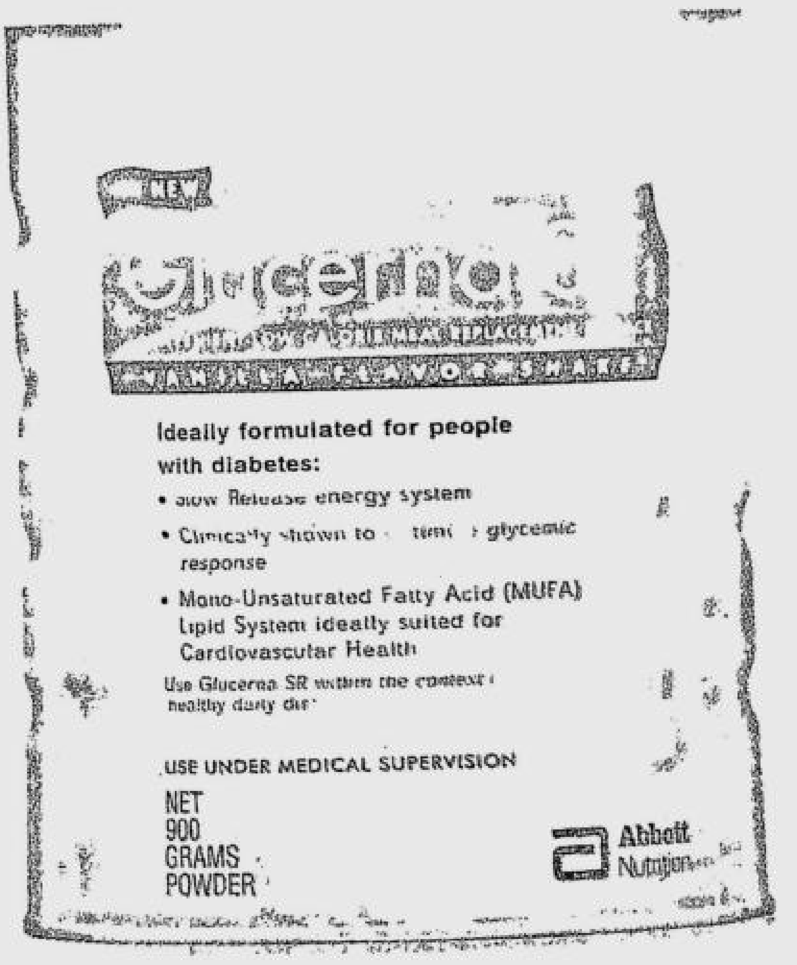
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Abbott A Promise for Life

RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

WE'RE A-OK. Heart patients, with their doctors and families, participated in the Heart Health Games at the Celebrity Sports Plaza in a bid to show the world that they too can lead active lives.

Playing games with your heart

From page E1

Mostly male

One striking characteristic of the sports event was that the participants were mostly male. Dr. Tim Dy, president of PSCCI, explained that due to biological factors, men with heart disease outnumbered women. This is partly because hormonal changes brought on by the menstrual cycle protect women from heart disease. Dr. Dy added that a higher percentage of those who smoked and those who had high blood pressure were male, making them even more susceptible to heart ailments.

PSCCI president Dr. Tim Dy

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) is one such ailment. According to Boston Scientific's patient guide, CAD is usually caused by the build-up of fatty deposits and plaque inside the coronary arteries. This reduces the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart and may cause chest pains and even heart attacks.

CAD is a chronic condition—it cannot be cured. It is instead managed by medication, angioplasty or bypass surgery.

Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty (PTCA) is the treatment championed by the Heart Health Games for being minimally invasive and having a lower risk as compared to bypass surgery which requires general anaesthesia and a 90-day time frame before full recovery. In contrast, an angioplasty takes only one to two hours and requires the patient to be awake. According to Dr. Dy, it is three to five times safer than bypass surgery.

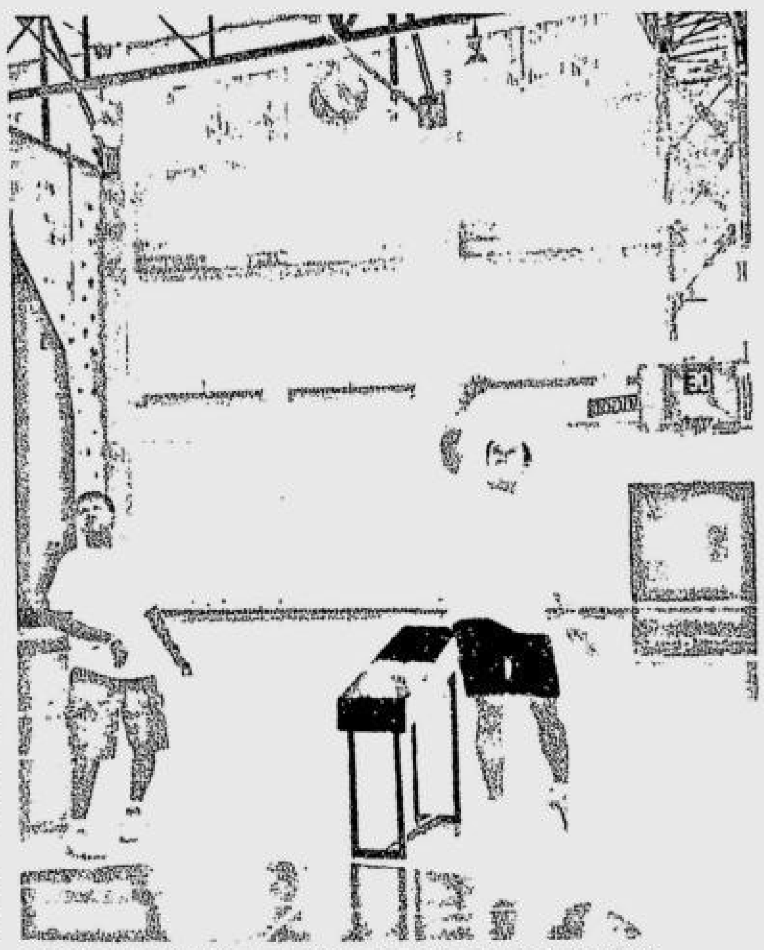
In terms of cost, the price of a stent angioplasty is quite competitive. One bypass surgery costs roughly the same as having four to five stents, with one stent at P95,000 to P140,000.

Boston Scientific claims that a patient should be able to get out of bed the day of the angioplasty. People should keep in mind however, that recovery time varies per individual.

As with any medical treatment, angioplasty has its benefits and risks. Heart patients must consider all information and consult with their doctor before committing to a procedure. An easier way to deal with this is to prevent getting heart disease in the first place.

Due to modern day high-calorie diets and busy lifestyles that leave no room for exercise, people suffering from heart ailments have become younger each year. Dr. Dy has performed angioplasty on someone as young as 31.

He recommends that even without prior symptoms, the best thing to do is still to have an annual heart checkup.



THREE-POINTERS are not impossible for this heart patient.

Snacking can be good for older adults

NEW YORK—A COUPLE SNACKS each day might help elderly adults ensure they get enough calories and needed nutrients, a study suggests.

For young and middle-aged adults, snacking can be the enemy of the waistline. As people age, however, their calorie intake tends to drop, either from appetite loss, medical conditions or difficulty buying food. This puts some older adults at risk of inadequate nutrition and unintended weight loss.

Research suggests that even among relatively healthy people in their 60s and beyond, those with low calorie, protein and carbohydrate intakes die sooner.

In the new study, published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, researchers found that snacks were an important source of older adults' daily calories and nutrients.

And in general, snackers took in more calories, protein, carbohydrates and fat than non-snackers did.

While that could be a problem for other age groups, the extra nutrients might benefit elderly men and women, according to the study authors.

Older adults who notice that they've lost weight, or that their appetite has waned, might want to add some snacks to their daily menu, said lead author Dr. Claire A. Zizza, an assistant professor of nutrition at Auburn University in Alabama.

She and her colleagues based their findings on data from a national health and nutrition survey that included 2,000 adults aged 65 and older. Overall, 84 percent said that they snacked in addition to eating meals.

On average, snacks accounted for one-quarter of the study participants' daily calories and carbohydrates, and 14 percent of their protein. Snackers ate about 250 calories more each day than non-snackers did.

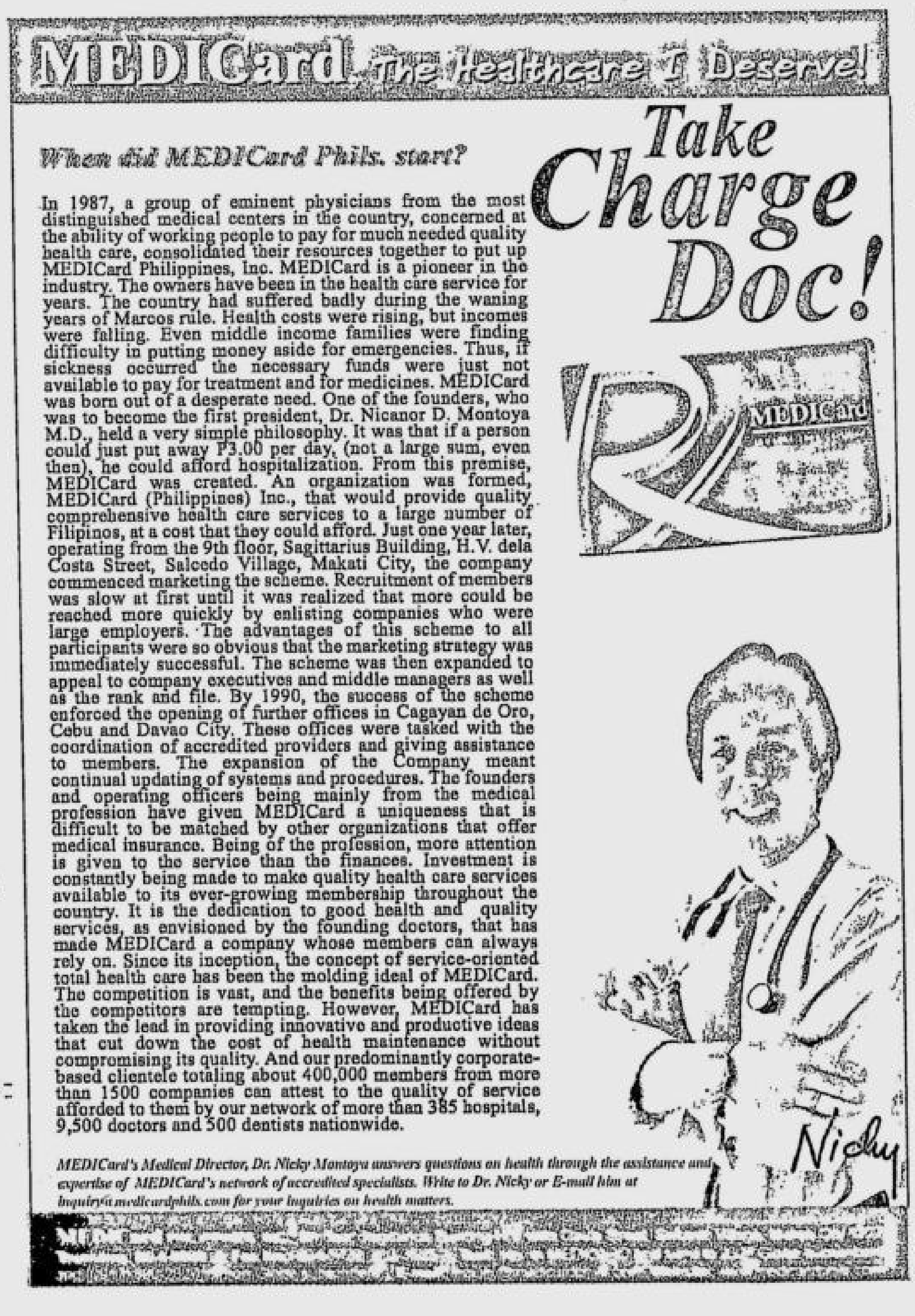
That doesn't mean that older adults should have a couple bowls of potato chips each day for the sake of their health, according to Zizza.

People should avoid "empty calories," she told Reuters Health, and instead choose healthful snacks like fruits, vegetables, yogurt, tuna and whole grains.

On the other hand, older adults who are eating a nutritionally sound diet shouldn't feel they have to give up their potato chips or desserts, Zizza noted.

"Favorite foods can be a great source of pleasure," she said.

SOURCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION, MAY 2007, REUTERS



MEDICard The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

When did MEDICard Phils. start?

In 1987, a group of eminent physicians from the most distinguished medical centers in the country, concerned at the ability of working people to pay for much needed quality health care, consolidated their resources together to put up MEDICard Philippines, Inc. MEDICard is a pioneer in the industry. The owners have been in the health care service for years. The country had suffered badly during the waning years of Marcos rule. Health costs were rising, but incomes were falling. Even middle income families were finding difficulty in putting money aside for emergencies. Thus, if sickness occurred the necessary funds were just not available to pay for treatment and for medicines. MEDICard was born out of a desperate need. One of the founders, who was to become the first president, Dr. Nicanor D. Montoya M.D., held a very simple philosophy. It was that if a person could just put away P3.00 per day, (not a large sum, even then), he could afford hospitalization. From this premise, MEDICard was created. An organization was formed, MEDICard (Philippines) Inc., that would provide quality comprehensive health care services to a large number of Filipinos, at a cost that they could afford. Just one year later, operating from the 9th floor, Sagittarius Building, H.V. dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City, the company commenced marketing the scheme. Recruitment of members was slow at first until it was realized that more could be reached more quickly by enlisting companies who were large employers. The advantages of this scheme to all participants were so obvious that the marketing strategy was immediately successful. The scheme was then expanded to appeal to company executives and middle managers as well as the rank and file. By 1990, the success of the scheme enforced the opening of further offices in Cagayan de Oro, Cebu and Davao City. These offices were tasked with the coordination of accredited providers and giving assistance to members. The expansion of the Company meant continual updating of systems and procedures. The founders and operating officers being mainly from the medical profession have given MEDICard a uniqueness that is difficult to be matched by other organizations that offer medical insurance. Being of the profession, more attention is given to the service than the finances. Investment is constantly being made to make quality health care services available to its ever-growing membership throughout the country. It is the dedication to good health and quality services, as envisioned by the founding doctors, that has made MEDICard a company whose members can always rely on. Since its inception, the concept of service-oriented total health care has been the molding ideal of MEDICard. The competition is vast, and the benefits being offered by the competitors are tempting. However, MEDICard has taken the lead in providing innovative and productive ideas that cut down the cost of health maintenance without compromising its quality. And our predominantly corporate-based clientele totaling about 400,000 members from more than 1500 companies can attest to the quality of service afforded to them by our network of more than 385 hospitals, 9,500 doctors and 500 dentists nationwide.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Tim Duncan reveals how he keeps cool

WHEN IT comes to experience in winning championships, superstar Tim Duncan of the National Basketball Association has plenty.

But for his three NBA championships and three finals' most valuable player awards, Duncan needed a shoe that could stand up to his physical play. The ClimaCool Stealth proved the most suitable shoe for Duncan.

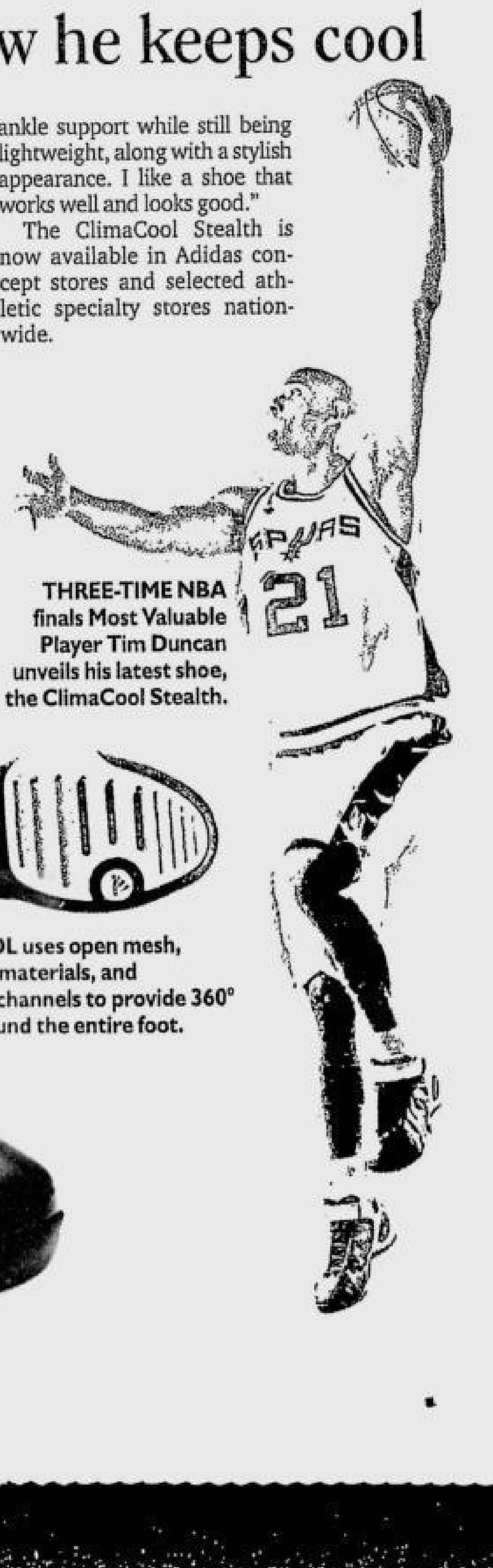
The breathable ClimaCool shoe features an adjustable strap for real ankle support. The upper is a synthetic material attached to the molded EVA midsole for lightweight cushioning. ClimaCool chassis is designed for best ventilation and midfoot support.

ClimaCool uses open mesh, breathable materials, and ventilation channels to provide 360° cooling around the entire foot.

The constant flow of cool air helps evaporate sweat and lower the temperature inside the shoe. ClimaCool air-conditions every step.

Duncan says of his new shoe, "It feels great. I like the overall design, but I really like the stabilization strap. In basketball shoes, I always look for good ankle support while still being lightweight, along with a stylish appearance. I like a shoe that works well and looks good."

The ClimaCool Stealth is now available in Adidas concept stores and selected athletic specialty stores nationwide.



THREE-TIME NBA finals Most Valuable Player Tim Duncan unveils his latest shoe, the ClimaCool Stealth.

CLIMACOOL uses open mesh, breathable materials, and ventilation channels to provide 360° cooling around the entire foot.

CLASSIC pique Lacoste fabric is braided as headband; silvery white stripes

MEN'S short shorts make the cut from green to club

Glammed up sportswear

VERSATILITY IS THE HALLMARK of the Lacoste collection this season.

Designed by creative director Christophe Lemaire, tennis dresses, skirts and tops are glammed up for a sultry night out on a sleek yacht.

For women, Lemaire focused on soft and fluid jerseys, giving oversized shirt dresses bold colors, the occasional nautical stripe and an exclusive map print. The classic polo pique fabric is reinvented as swimsuits and also larger-than-life braided headbands in bright and beautiful colors.

The signature piece of the collection is a long pleated skirt in diaphanous jersey that could work as a wrap over a swimsuit by day and comes into its own shimmering elegance by night.

For men, Lemaire translated the comfort of home wear into street-savvy staples. Striped oxford made into button downs with matching trousers allows the classic pajama bottom to escape the confines of the bedroom. Window-pane checks on shirts and short shorts will make the cut from green to club.

Lacoste is exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists, Inc. Its stores are located at Power Plant Mall, SM Megamall, Gateway Mall, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Galleria, Greenbelt 3, Corte de las Palmas-Alabang Town Center, The Podium, Ayala Center Cebu, SM Mall of Asia, Trinoma, Rustan's Tower, and Rustan's Makati.

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PROMO MECHANICS:

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2. Open the sticker to reveal entry code.
3. Text WYETH<space>Entry code<space>Name/Age/Address to 2305 to redeem the free Globe load and to enter the raffle. Only 1 raffle entry is valid per entry code.
4. Phonekit winners will receive a text message, registered mail and a phone call. The phone call will inform them of the designated Globe Hub branch at which they can claim their prize. To claim, winners must present the text and mail notification and 2 valid IDs.
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6. A participant can only win once during the raffle draw. Should a name be drawn more than once, the prize of a higher value shall be awarded and another name will be drawn as replacement.
7. All officers and employees of WPI, Globe, their advertising and promo agencies, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promo.
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FORMER PBA cager Norman "Mr. 100 Percent" Black with son Aaron

FERDINAND Estrada (left) with other parents of Lourdes School of Mandaluyong. Varsity players decide to enroll the whole team in Best Center to enhance their skills.

TWO-TIME PBA MVP Benjie Paras with sons Andre and Kobe

Best way to follow in dad's footsteps

MOST KIDS LOOK UP TO THEIR FATHERS as role models and heroes.

Inspired by their dads, they pursue the same career path. Kiefer and Thirdy Ravena, Andre and Kobe Paras, Michael Alfonso Santos, and Aaron Black all want to play ball just like their famous dads.

Kiefer, the 13-year-old son of ex-professional player Bong Ravena says he wants to be just like dad who made a name in the industry.

His 10-year-old brother, Thirdy, already knows which team to play for in the Philippine Basketball Association—Talk 'N Text where his father last played.

Also following on their fathers' footsteps are 11-year-old Andre and 9-year-old Kobe, kids of two-time PBA Most Valuable Player award-winner Benjie Paras; 6-year-old Michael Alfonso, only son of Barangay Ginebra's Rodney Santos; and 10-year-old Aaron, son of PBA grand-slam champion coach Norman Black.

Both Paras boys plan to become professional players someday like their father, who played center and power forward.

As for Michael Alfonso, the elder Santos says the boy already dreams of playing for Ginebra in the NBA.

Coach Black says his son Aaron "takes basketball seriously" as he demonstrated during the SBP (Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas) and FBL (Futures Basketball League) tournaments.

To help their sons achieve their goals, the supportive fathers sent them to the Milo-sponsored Best Center, the country's longest-running scientific basketball program.

The elder Paras and Santos both participated in the clinics when they were younger.

Paras, who joined the clinics when he was 10, says the Best Center's training helped him achieve what he did so he wants his sons to benefit from it as well.

Santos, a Best trainee at 17, says the clinics can probably make his son a better player than him.

A clinic instructor, Norman says the center is good for aspiring cagers as it teaches the correct fundamentals and the importance of practicing what kids learn.

Ravena, the 1992 PBA top rookie, says he has heard a lot of good things about the center that is why he decided to enroll his sons in the clinics. Kiefer and Thirdy were selected to participate in the recent Las Vegas Easter Classics, along with Shaun Danielle, son of another PBA standout, Danny Ildefonso.

If the pros are willing to entrust their children to the center, parents of members of the Lourdes School of Mandaluyong varsity team are happy to do the same.

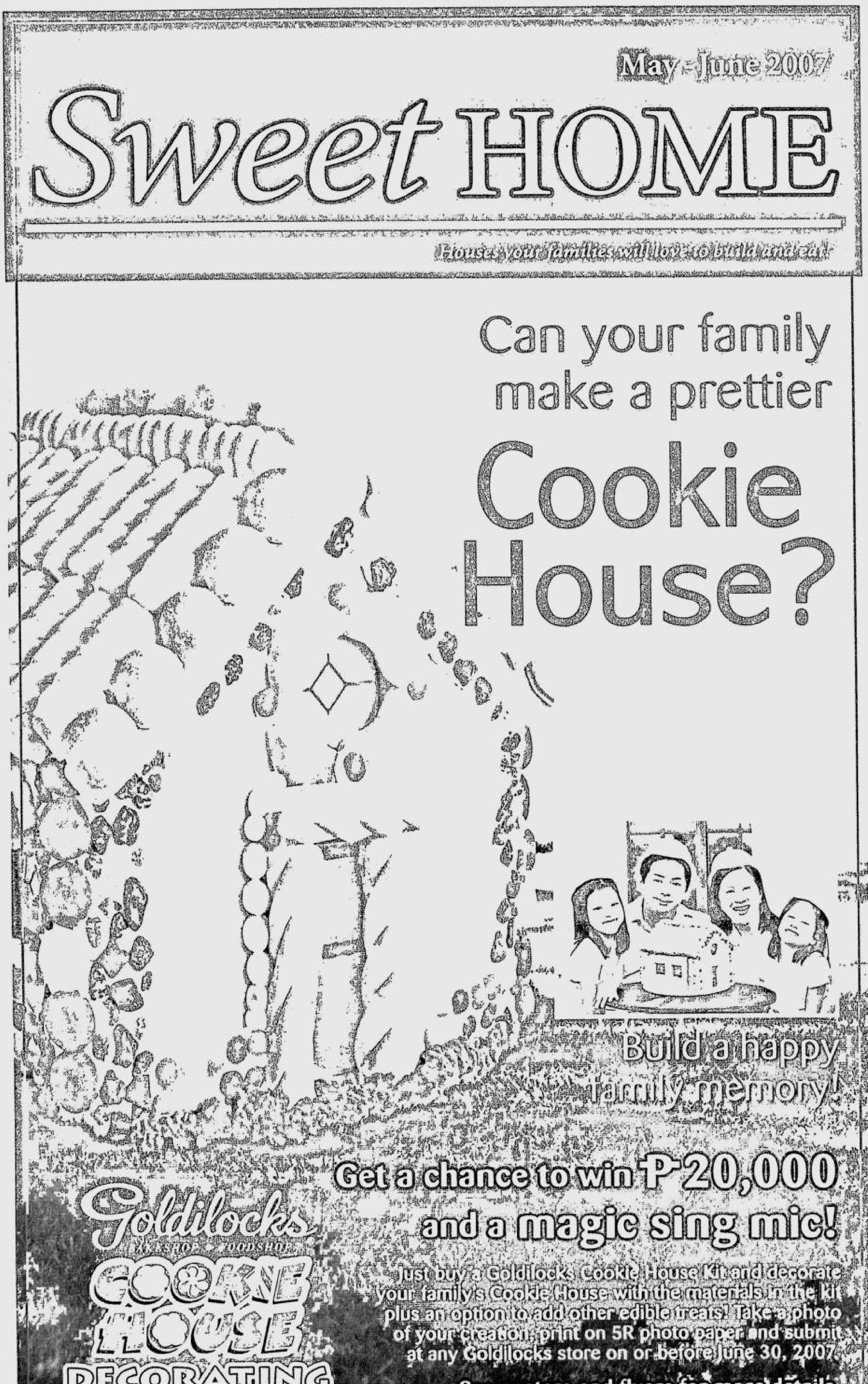
Ferdinand Estrada says his eldest son Nicolo improved his ball-handling after only one session.

Aside from physical benefits, parents and children say they also learned certain values.

Paras says basketball helps a player become strong and enhances his ability to analyze problems and make quick decisions. Ravena says a player "develops patience and learns how to handle frustrations" on and off the court.

Estrada says sports teaches discipline and keeps a child away from drugs and bad company while Black says it helps kids understand the value of hard work, concentration, and obedience.

GINEBRA San Miguel point-guard Rodney Santos with son Michael Alfonso



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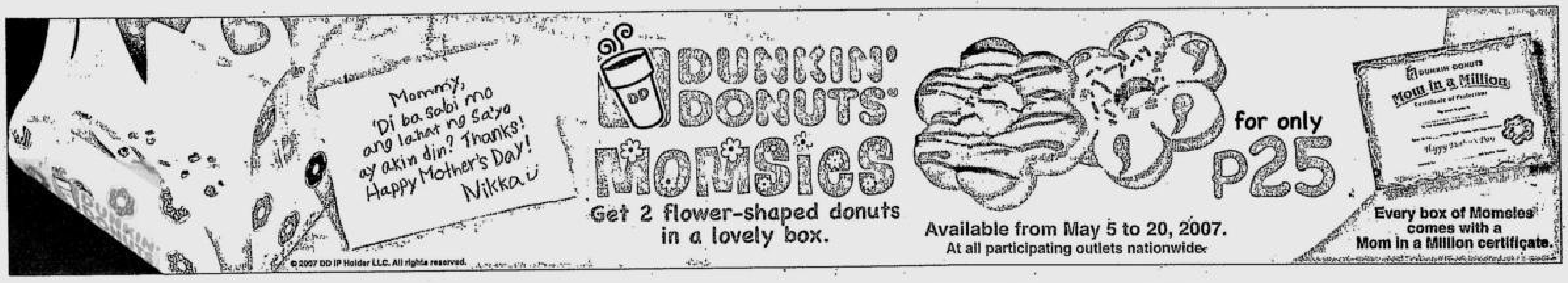

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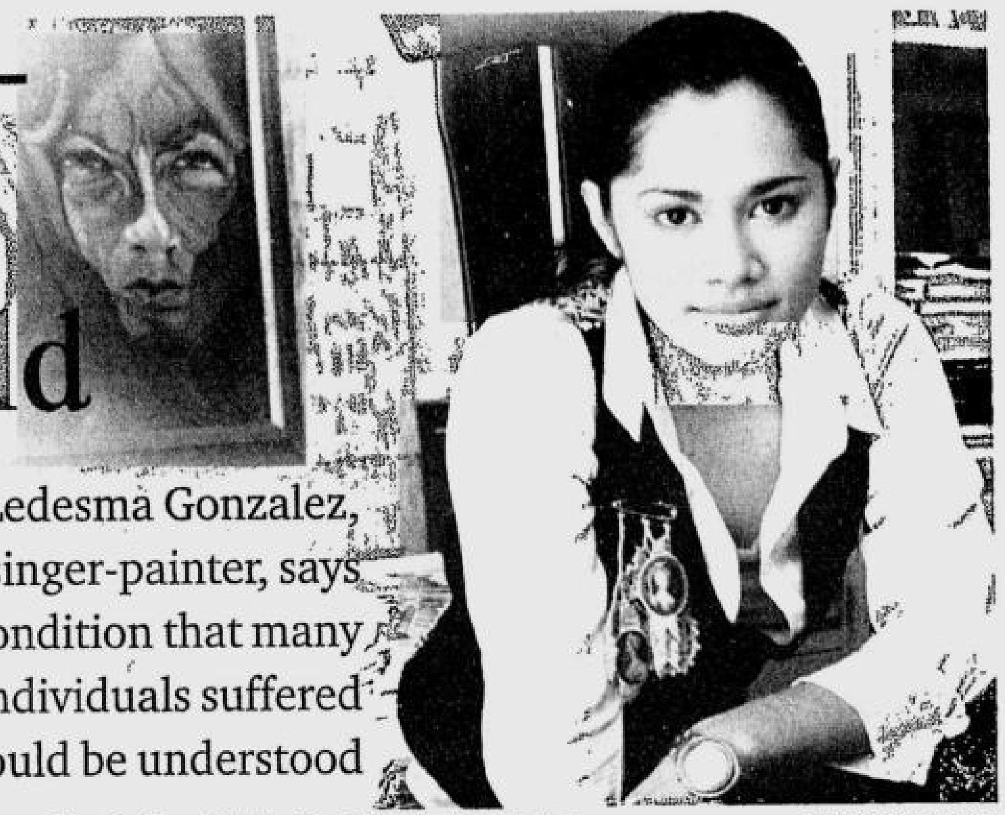
She's bipolar—and prepared to tell the world

Isabella Ledesma Gonzalez, singer-painter, says this condition that many famous individuals suffered should be understood



ISABELLA at home in Pasay City. On the wall behind her is her first oil painting.

PHOTO BY RODEL ROTONI

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

SHE BROKE IT CASUALLY, IN the course of enumerating schools she had attended.

In an exclusive interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, singer-painter Isabella Ledesma Gonzalez revealed: "In my senior year at the International School, I was diagnosed as bipolar, so I took a seven-month [academic] break." She was 17. "It was one of my roughest periods. I took two years to adjust."

The daughter of singer Kuh Ledesma and businessman Louie Gonzalez was keenly aware of the impact of this revelation.

"I am opening up about it now. I'd like people to understand. It's a chemical imbalance," she said. "Some people have asthma; some have diabetes. I am bipolar."

Making light of things, she noted, "Hey, I'm in good company. [Comedian] Jim Carrey, [former US President] Bill Clinton and [CNN owner] Ted Turner are bipolar—and achievers." The Internet lists other bipolar (manic-depressive) celebrities: T.S. Eliot and Emily Dickinson, Sigmund Freud, Tennessee Williams, Vincent van Gogh, Elizabeth Taylor and Cary Grant.

By coming out, Isabella said, she hoped to erase the stigma attached to the condition. "I feel I have to explain. People may be wondering why I'm sometimes *kiti-kiti* (a wiggler) and at other times quiet."

Down to one pill

Dr. Randy Dellosa, resident psychologist on the reality show "Pinoy Big Brother," said bipolar personalities experience "extreme mood swings, usually triggered by emotional issues." But, he said, "It's very manageable with medication."

She's down to one pill, Isabella volunteered. And she meets regularly with a Christian counselor and a clinical psychologist. "My Christian counselor advised me not to allow negative thoughts to go beyond two sentences. 'Don't allow them to become a story because that can overwhelm you,' she said. The Lord doesn't want us to be shaken."

It has been a tough year for the 23-year-old. Her paternal grandmother Victoria Quirino-Delgado, daughter of former President Elpidio Quirino, passed away in Amsterdam; her maternal grandmother Carmen Restek suffered two strokes. On top of this, her father Louie has been implicated in the murder of his stepbrother Federico "Rico" Delgado.

Through all these, Isabella has maintained a willful optimism. "If you look at the heart of the matter," she said, "it's a good time in my dad's life. I firmly believe he's being drawn closer to the Lord."

Smile on her face

She has yet to talk to him since the headline-hogging incident. Louie is reportedly undergoing treatment for substance abuse and depression. "He is there for his well-being," Isabella said. "He is not guilty; knowing this keeps a smile on my face."

Through the tempests, mom Kuh has been her anchor. "There's a reason that God allowed her to study nursing," Isabella quipped.

Kuh and Isabella share a love for art and music. With graphic artist Bogee Romero, Isabella recently collaborated on the art work for Kuh's latest album, "K." And recently, Isabella recorded a duet, "Lullaby of Birdland," with jazz legend Annie Brazil. It was a "dream come true," she said, working with Annie.

She hopes to include "Lullaby" in her own jazzy/big-band album "Higher Standards."

In July, she plans to release her pop-alternative album "iDENTity."

The album is envisioned as part of a trilogy, along with an exhibit and book of paintings. Isabella, who currently co-hosts "SOP," GMA 7's Sunday noontime variety show, had taken up painting at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

She compares her music to her painting: "It's like abstract expressionism which I liken to alternative music. It's edgy … It's about expressing how you feel."

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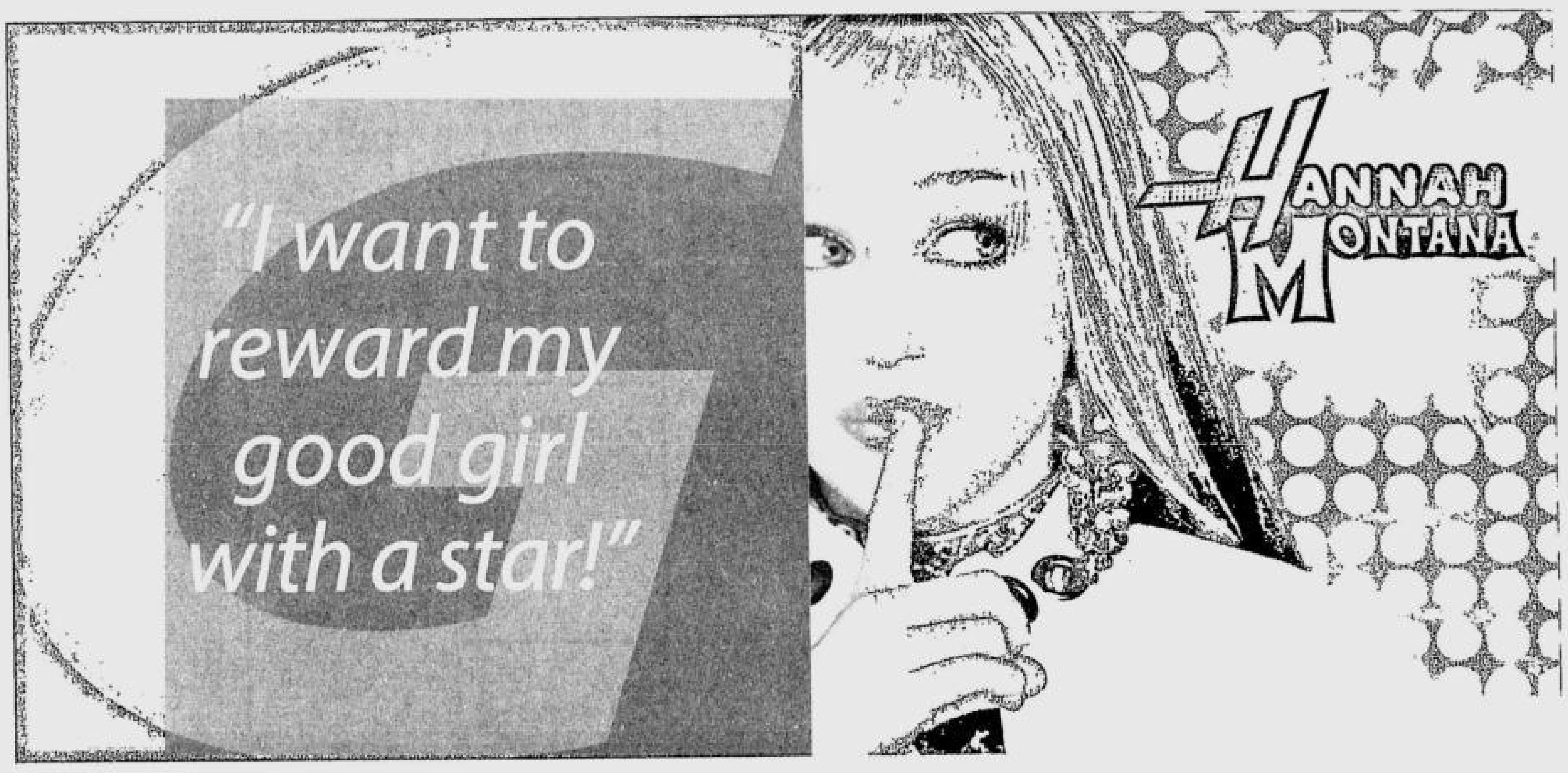

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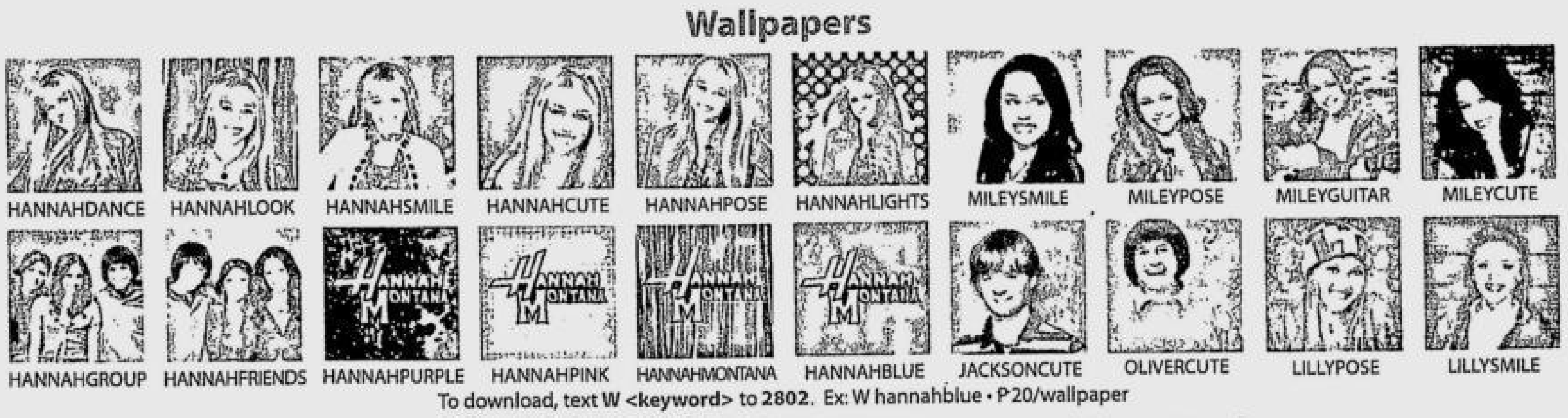

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- 4 THE CONDEMNED 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
- 5 28 WEEKS LATER 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
- 6 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:00 2:50 5:40 8:30
- 7 SPIDER-MAN 3 3:20 6:10 9:00
- 8 IndieSine: MANORO 1:10 3:00 4:50 6:40 8:30
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- 3 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:10 3:05 6:00 9:00
- 4 THE CONDEMNED 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
- 5 28 WEEKS LATER 12:40 2:55 5:10 7:30 10:00
- 6 SPIDER-MAN 3 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
- 7 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

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- 2 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:00 2:40 5:20 8:00
- 3 SPIDER-MAN 3 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
- 4 28 WEEKS LATER 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
- 5 THE CONDEMNED 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05
- 6 SPIDER-MAN 3 1:40 4:20 7:00
- 7 SPIDER-MAN 3 11:00 1:40 4:50 7:00 9:30
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- 2 MASAHISTA
- 3 BIGLANG LIKO
- 4 RUMBLE BOYS

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- 3 SUNSHINE
- 4 KATAS
- 5 SATANICA

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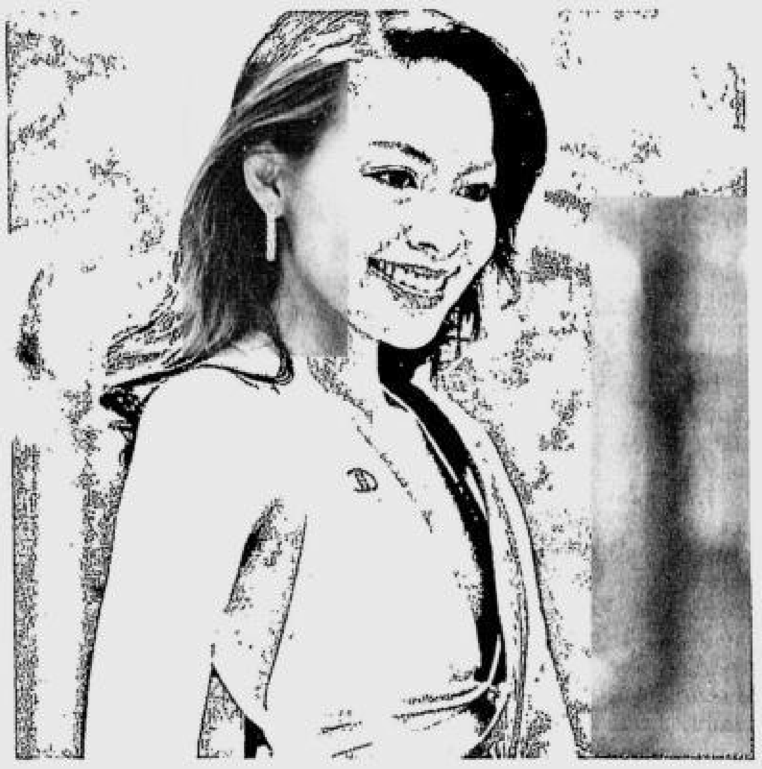

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4	SPIDERMAN 3	11:35 , 2:25 , 5:15 8:05 , 10:50	GP
5	SPIDERMAN 3	11:00 , 1:50 , 4:40 7:30 , 10:20	GP

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EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
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May 31 , 2007	RJ Jimenez	8:30 PM
May 11 , 18 , 25 , 2007	Drag - Ons	9:00 PM
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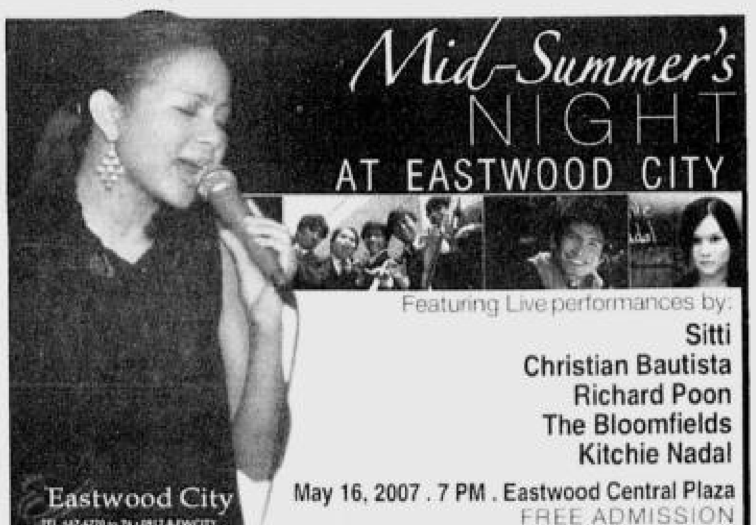

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2	SPIDER-MAN 3	1:00, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30	G
3	SPIDER-MAN 3	1:30, 4:40, 7:50, 11:00	G
4	28 WEEKS LATER	1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00	R-13

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Miss RP-Earth focused on goal

By Armin Adina

JEANNE HARN, NEWLY CROWNED MISS Philippines-Earth 2007, has laughed off rumors that she is an unpopular candidate in the recently concluded pageant.

The talk started circulating after viewers reportedly noticed non-winning candidates congratulating Jeanne's court but appeared to be ignoring her during the coronation.

> She's sure the other contestants are happy for her

"The telecast was cut short and the viewers saw only the part where they approached the rest of the Top 5 (Miss Air Krystle Ann Dizon, Miss Water Joyce Nocomura, Miss Fire Sarah Katrina Miñoza and Miss Ecotourism Ana Katrina Bautista)," Jeanne explained.

Far end

Host Piolo Pascual had prompted her victory walk at that point and she was getting ready at the far end of the stage, away from the other candidates.

"I did not proceed with the walk and tried to reach out to the other girls, but they were too engrossed in all the fanfare," she said. "But they all congratulated me afterwards."

She regretted not having her photo taken with her family after the program "because the stage was dismantled right after photographers took pictures of the Top 5 winners."

The 5'7" model and advertising executive got the loudest cheers from the audience in the University of the Philippines Theater in Quezon City—complete with drumbeat—whenever her name was announced during the competition.

Zero conflict

Such a show of support could not have been a source of jealousy among her fellow candidates, she clarified, as they "all got along well with each other."

Jeanne even told INQUIRER Entertainment she had been seeing the other girls even after the pageant. "Last Wednesday, I hung out with (semifinalists) Anna Rose Jebb and Mary Liza Diño."

There never was animosity among this year's crop of contestants, she asserted.

"There were some contestants who always went in pairs—the roommates—but we were all friends," she related.

At the Hotel Intercontinental Manila, where they were billeted, she said they "raided other contestants' rooms and shared stories, make-up, clothes and even false eyelashes!"

Happy for her

Jeanne knows her batch mates were happy for her victory, and she believes they will support her in her quest to give the country its first Miss Earth crown.

Jeanne hopes to surpass the feat of last year's representative, Catherine Untalan, who placed third. "Once my training starts, I will be focused and determined," she declared.

But her preparations were put on hold because of the environmental activities lined up for her and the other top finalists.

The Miss Earth pageants promote environmental management, with the winners acting as spokespersons for environmental causes.

Legacy

"I am really excited about what my batch would leave as the legacy of our reign," she said, adding that she applauds last year's top queens for coming out with a book on the environment as a token of their concern for Mother Nature.

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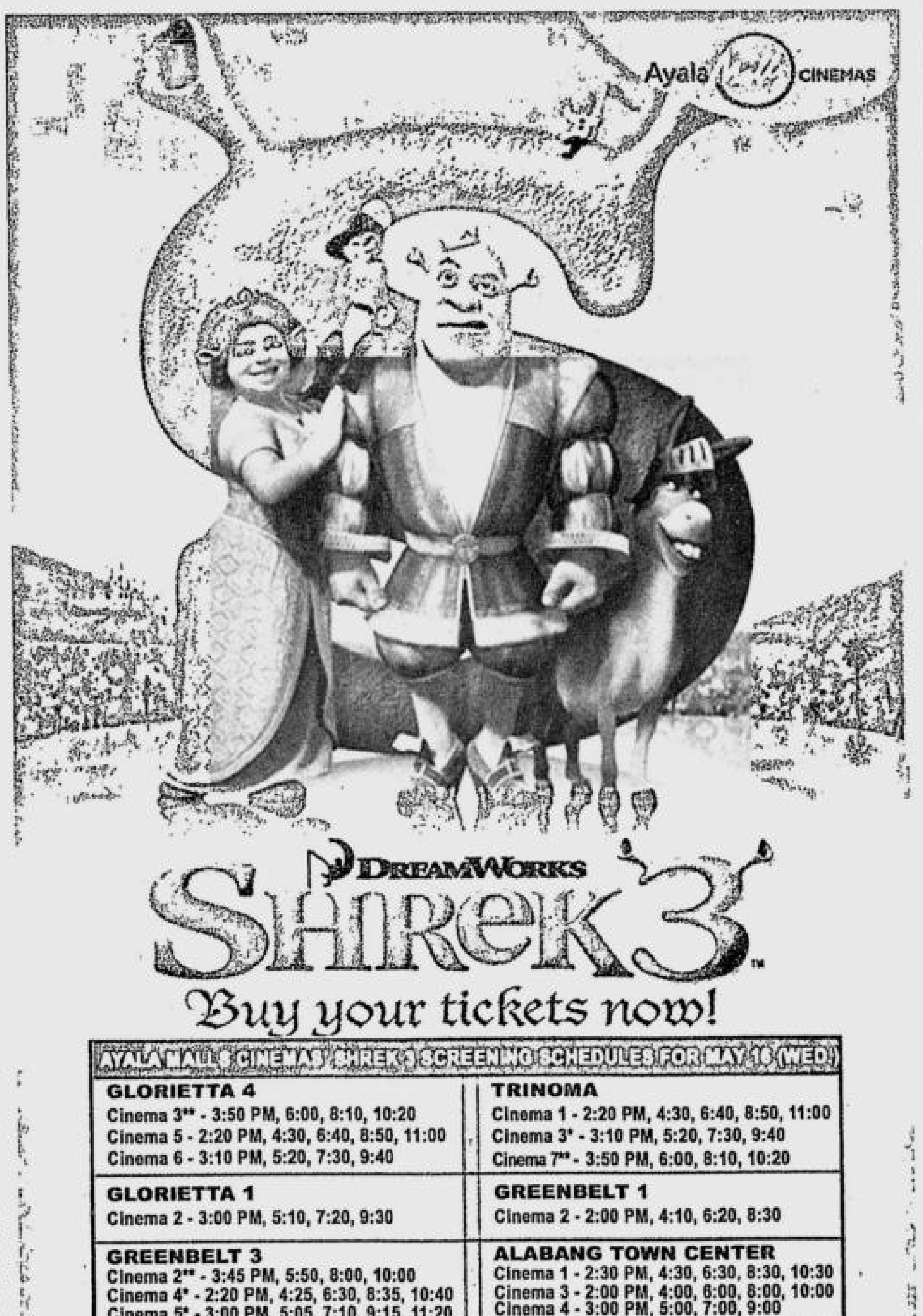
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GLORIETTA 1 Cinema 2 - 3:00 PM, 5:10, 7:20, 9:30	**GREENBELT 1** Cinema 2 - 2:00 PM, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30
GREENBELT 3 Cinema 2** - 3:45 PM, 5:50, 8:00, 10:00 Cinema 4* - 2:20 PM, 4:25, 6:30, 8:35, 10:40 Cinema 5* - 3:00 PM, 5:05, 7:10, 9:15, 11:20	**ALABANG TOWN CENTER** Cinema 1 - 2:30 PM, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 Cinema 3 - 2:00 PM, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00 Cinema 4 - 3:00 PM, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
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1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 28 WEEKS LATER
5 LUCKY YOU
6 SPIDER-MAN 3/ CARTOON NETWORK
PREMIERE CINEMA
SPIDER-MAN 3
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SPIDER-MAN 3

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
SPIDER-MAN 3
CINEMA 2
SPIDER-MAN 3
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3/ CARTOON NETWORK
9 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
10 LUCKY YOU
11 28 WEEKS LATER
12 CONDEMNED

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 CONDEMNED
7 SPIDER-MAN,3
8 LUCKY YOU
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 SPIDER-MAN 3
11 SPIDER-MAN 3
12 THE SHOOTER/ CARTOON NETWORK

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 THE SHOOTER
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 CONDEMNED
7 28 WEEKS LATER
8 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 SPIDER-MAN 3
11 PAN'S LABYRINTH
12 WILD HOGS/ CARTOON NETWORK

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
7 28 WEEKS LATER
8 PAN'S LABYRINTH/ CARTOON NETWORK
9 CONDEMNED
10 THE SHOOTER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 CONDEMNED
4 SPIDER-MAN 3/ CARTOON NETWORK
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 CONDEMNED
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 LUCKY YOU
9 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 CONDEMNED
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 CONDEMNED
3 LUCKY YOU
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 28 WEEKS LATER
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
11 PAN'S LABYRINTH/ CARTOON NETWORK
12 THE SHOOTER

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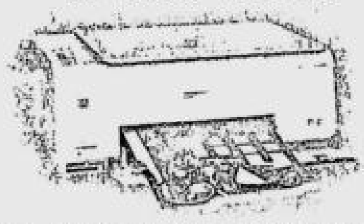
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 PREMONITION
3 THE SHOOTER
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 PAN'S LABYRINTH
4 FIREHOUSE DOG

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 CONDEMNED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3 SPIDER-MAN 3
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6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
8 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 GRAY MATTERS
5 THE SHOOTER
6 THE LAST MIMZY/ CARTOON NETWORK

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1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

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1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SUNSHINE
4 PREMONITION

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 THE SHOOTER
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 THE LAST MIMZY/ CARTOON NETWORK
6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

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1 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SUNSHINE

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 PREMONITION
4 THE REAPING

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2 THE SHOOTER
3 ROCKY BALBOA
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 LUCKY YOU
4 28 WEEKS LATER

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
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2 PREMONITION
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3

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3 PREMONITION
4 TURISTAS
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3

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4 THE REAPING

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1 THE LAST MIMZY
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 THE SHOOTER
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 THE REAPING
7 RESERVED
8 GRAY MATTERS

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 PREMONITION
4 GRAY MATTERS
5 TURISTAS
6 THE SHOOTER
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 PREMONITION
4 THE REAPING

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Sneak peek: 'Rome'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Intrigue, deceit, violence and death

WE'VE PREVIEWED THE FIRST FOUR episodes of the final season of HBO's mega-epic, "Rome," which started telecasting last May 7 at 11 p.m. Our "sneak peek" report:

The new season is darker than the first, following the assassination of Julius Caesar at the Roman senate. Unable to defend his master, Vorenus, the series' "everyman" protagonist, is shot through with guilt and grief.

Adding immeasurably to his sense of loss and dark view of life are the suicide of his wife Niobe, and the disappearance of his daughters and sons.

Driven to near-madness, Vorenus sinks into deep despair—until Mark Antony makes him a captain and orders him to control the vicious gangs at the Avantine Collegium.

The royals and "immortals" in "Rome" have their own share of demons. Mark Antony raises an army, Octavian vanishes to do the same. Cleopatra arrives in Rome to win Mark Antony's favor, Brutus and Cassius launch dark machinations, and another assassination, this time by poisoning, is put on effect.

These and other tempestuous developments plunge the new season into the vortex of heightened intrigue, violence and death.

Despite its famous and infamous characters' major moves, however, it's Vorenus' personal tragedy that firmly holds the season's dramatic center.

This provides actor Kevin McKidd with a golden opportunity to start his thespic stuff. He's no slacker in the acting department, having won awards for his stage performances, as well as a Best Actor nomination for his work in the film, "Sixteen Years of Alcohol."

But his character's emotional and physical breakdown in "Rome" is a daunting test—which he passes with an admirable combination of intensity and restraint.

This is a feather in his cap. Other actors would opt to tear the scenery and screen to shreds with over-the-top caterwauling in the "tormented" role. Thank goodness, McKidd realizes that less is indeed more, and that one emotional breakdown goes a long, long way.

Thus, he judiciously provides the series with its disciplined storm center. A good thing, too because the new episodes are sometimes characterized by a distinctly lush, roseate and melodramatic coloration, especially when the action focuses on its florid female characters, like Atia and Sevilla.

The actresses assigned to these roles play them for all the icy vitriol and stratospherically-raised eyebrows they're worth, and it's wicked fun—which however gets tedious after a while. So, when the drama finally regains its proper focus, it's a relief.

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28 WEEKS LATER R13 1:40,3:50,6:00,8:10	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 12:40,3:40,6:40,9:40	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 2:50,5:50,8:50
LUCKY YOU PG13 2:45,5:20,7:55,10:30	THE CONDEMNED R13 12:50,3:15,5:40,8:05	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 1:30,4:30,7:30,10:30

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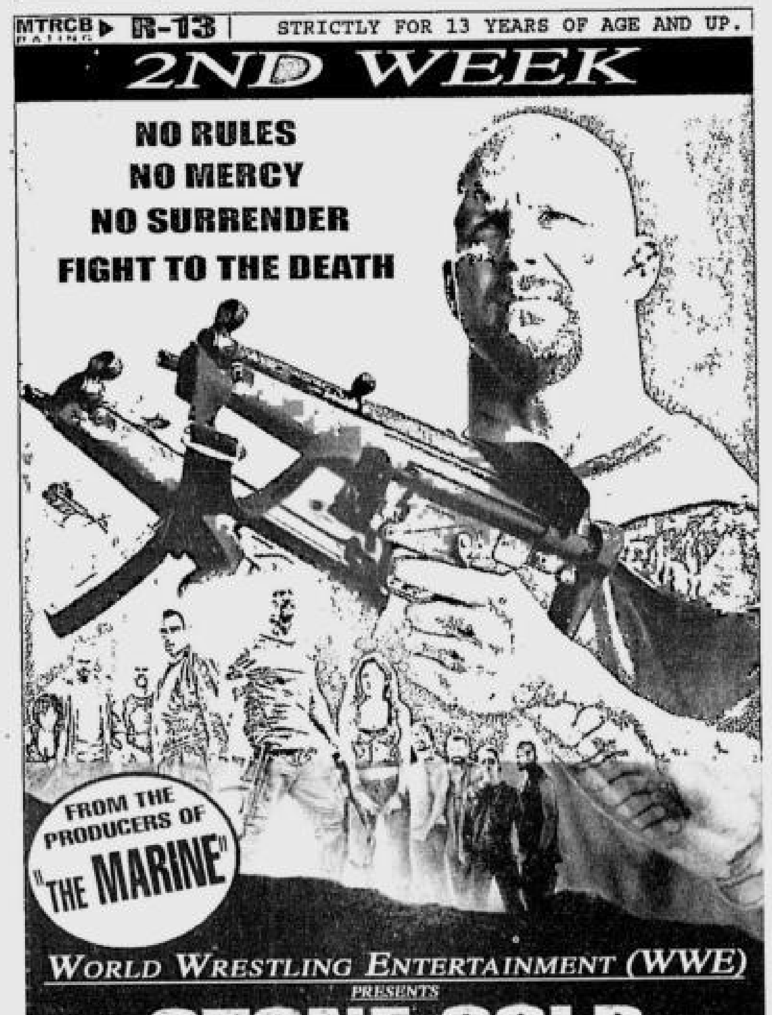
2ND WEEK



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① SPIDER-MAN 3
MTRCB. GP
1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30

② SPIDER-MAN 3
MTRCB. GP
2:30, 5:30, 8:30

③ 28 WEEKS LATER
MTRCB: R-13 12:40
3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

④ LUCKY YOU
MTRCB: PG-13
1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE SPIDER-MAN 3 (GP)
12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30

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3:35 / 4:05 / 4:30 / 5:05 / 5:30 / 6:30 / 7:00
7:25 / 8:00 / 8:25 / 9:25 / 9:55 / 10:20

CONDEMNED
1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30

LUCKY YOU
12:50 / 3:40 / 6:30 / 9:20

DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

28 WEEKS LATER
1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50

PERFECT STRANGER
1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40

SPIDERMAN 3
12:15 / 3:10 / 6:05 / 9:00

AliMALL 5

1 28 WEEKS LATER
12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45

2 SPIDERMAN 3
12:40 / 3:20 / 6:00 / 8:40

3 SPIDERMAN 3
2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00

4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30

5 CONDEMNED
12:45 / 3:25 / 6:05 / 8:45

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4:35 PM - Sta Lucia vs. Welcoat ; 7:20 PM - Talk N Txt vs. Air 21

PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
MAY 18 2007, FRIDAY
4:35 PM - Welcoat vs. Red Bull ; 7:20 PM - Alaska vs. Pure foods

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 28 WEEKS LATER	2 SPIDER-MAN 3	3 THE CONDEMNED	4 SPIDER-MAN 3
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 SPIDER-MAN 3	2 LUCKY YOU	3 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 PERFECT STRANGERS	5 THE CONDEMNED	6 SPIDER-MAN 3	7 28 WEEKS LATER
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 LUCKY YOU	2 SPIDER-MAN 3		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 28 WEEKS LATER GUARANTEED SEATS	4 LUCKY YOU GUARANTEED SEATS	5 SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 SPIDER-MAN 3		
	3 LUCKY YOU	4 THE CONDEMNED	5 28 WEEKS LATER	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SPIDER-MAN 3	2 SPIDER-MAN 3	3	4 GRAY MATTERS
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SPIDER-MAN 3	2 LUCKY YOU		
	3 28 WEEKS LATER	4 THE CONDEMNED	5 SPIDER-MAN 3	

At the Activity Center

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Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Laguna Expo May 7 to 13, 2007	Bratz Fashion Show May 13, 2007
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Mother's Day Celebration May 13, 2007	Strawberry Shortcake & Friends: The Big Berry Bake Off May 11 to 13, 2007

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Strawberry Shortcake and Friends
The Big Berry Bake Off
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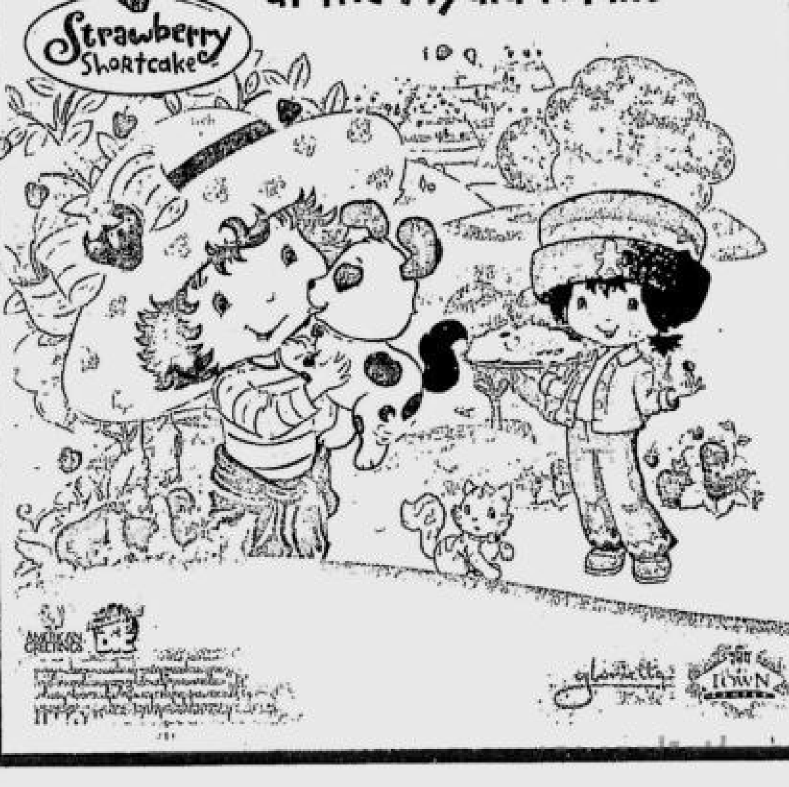

Glorietta
Activity Center
May 3, 6pm
May 4, 3pm & 6pm
May 5 & 6, 11:30am , 3pm & 6pm

Market! Market!
Activity Center
May 11-13
11am , 3pm & 6pm

Alabang Town Center
Activity Center
May 18-20
11am , 3pm & 6pm

TriNoma
Activity Center
May 25-27
11am , 3pm & 6pm

Ayala Center Cebu
Activity Center
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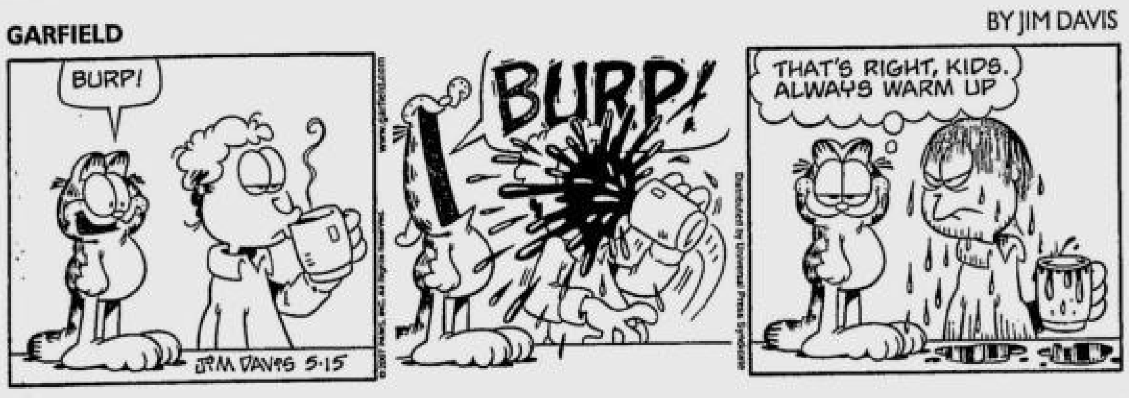
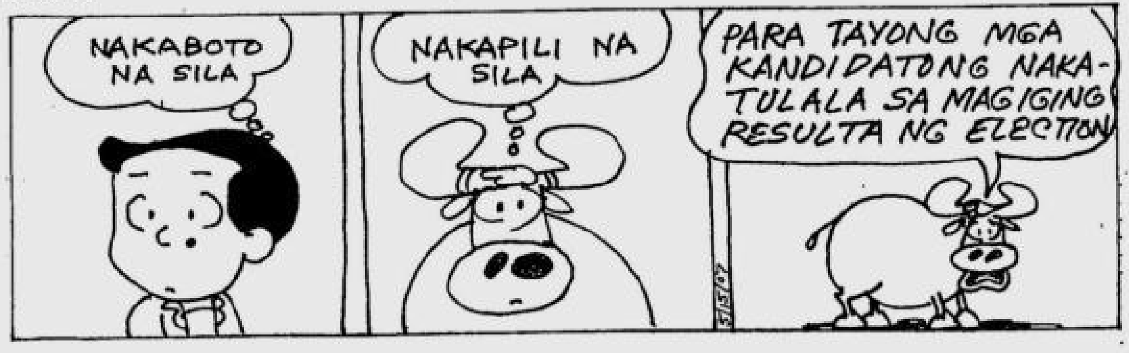
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


BURP!
JIM DAVIS 5-15
BURP!
THAT'S RIGHT, KIDS. ALWAYS WARM UP

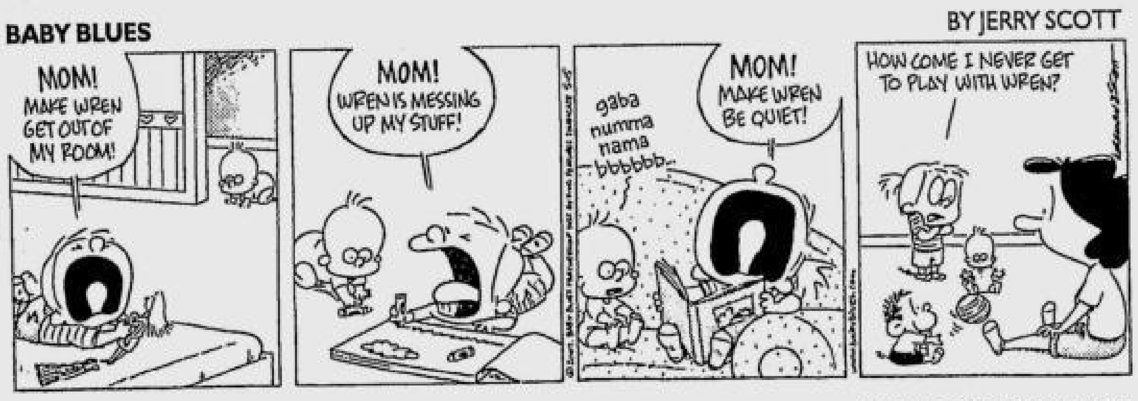
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAKABOTO NA SILA
NAKAPILI NA SILA
PARA TAYONG MGA KANDIDATONG NAKA-TULALA SA MAGIGING RESULTA NG ELECTION
5/15/07

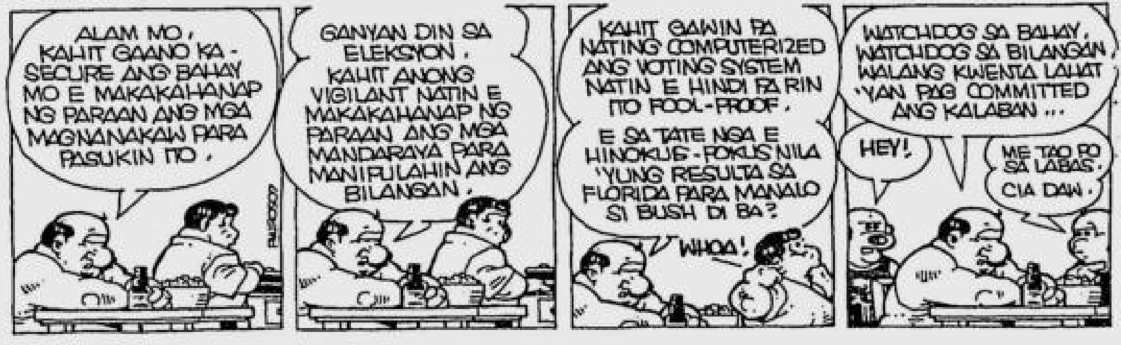
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOM! MAKE WREN GET OUT OF MY ROOM!
MOM! WREN IS MESSING UP MY STUFF!
gaba numma nama bbbbbb
MOM! MAKE WREN BE QUIET!
HOW COME I NEVER GET TO PLAY WITH WREN?

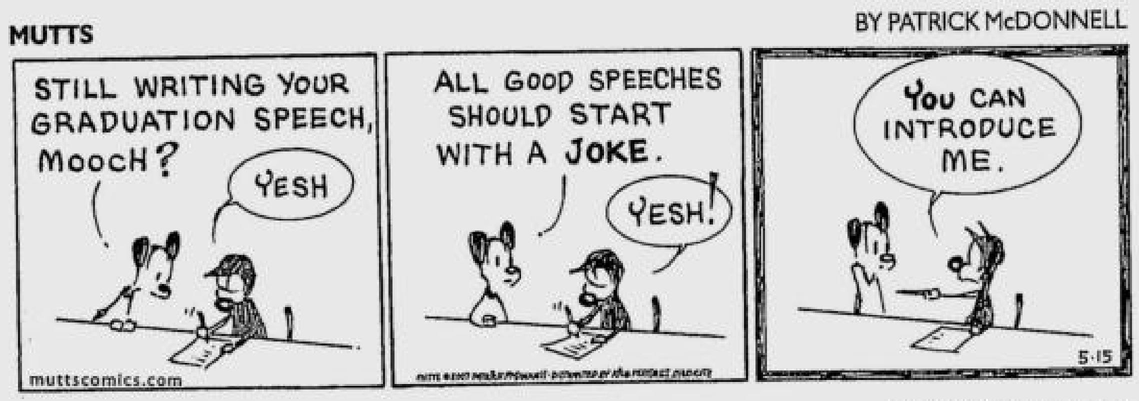
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM MO, KAHIT GAANO KA-SECURE ANG BAHAY MO E MAKAKAHANAP NG PARAAN ANG MGA MAGNANAKAW PARA PASUKIN ITO.
GANYAN DIN SA ELEKSYON. KAHIT ANONG VIGILANT NATIN E MAKAKAHANAP NG PARAAN ANG MGA MANDARAYA PARA MANIPULAHIN ANG BILANGAN.
KAHIT GAWIN PA NATING COMPUTERIZED ANG VOTING SYSTEM NATIN E HINDI PA RIN ITO FOOL-PROOF.
E SA TATE NGA E HINOKUS-POKUS NILA 'YUNG RESULTA SA FLORIDA PARA MANALO SI BUSH DI BA?
WHOA!
WATCHDOG SA BAHAY, WATCHDOG SA BILANGAN WALANG KWENTA LAHAT 'YAN PAG COMMITTED ANG KALABAN...
HEY!
ME TAO PO SA LABAS. CIA DAW.

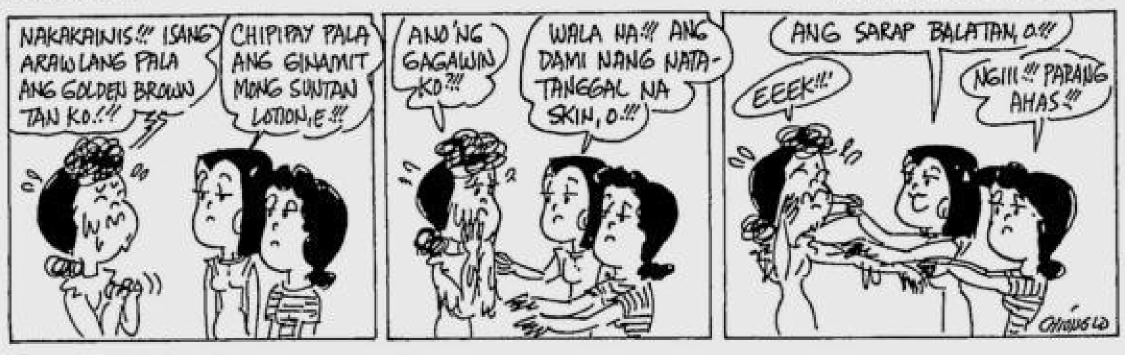
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


STILL WRITING YOUR GRADUATION SPEECH, MOOCH?
YESH
muttscomics.com
ALL GOOD SPEECHES SHOULD START WITH A JOKE.
YESH!
YOU CAN INTRODUCE ME.
5.15

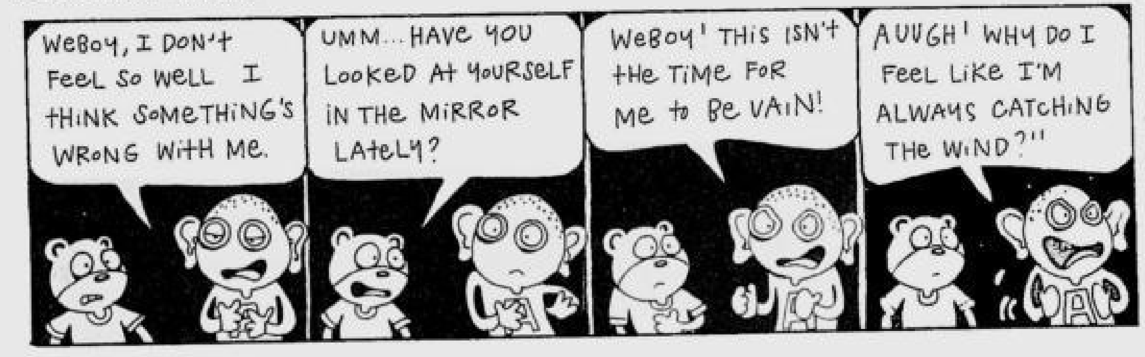
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NAKAKAINIS!!! ISANG ARAW LANG PALA ANG GOLDEN BROWN TAN KO!!!
CHIPIPAY PALA ANG GINAMIT MONG SUNTAN LOTION, E!!!
ANO'NG GAGAWIN KO?!!
WALA NA!!! ANG DAMI NANG NATA-TANGGAL NA SKIN, O!!!
ANG SARAP BALATAN, O!!!
EEEK!!!
NGIII!!! PARANG AHAS!!!
CHIONGLO

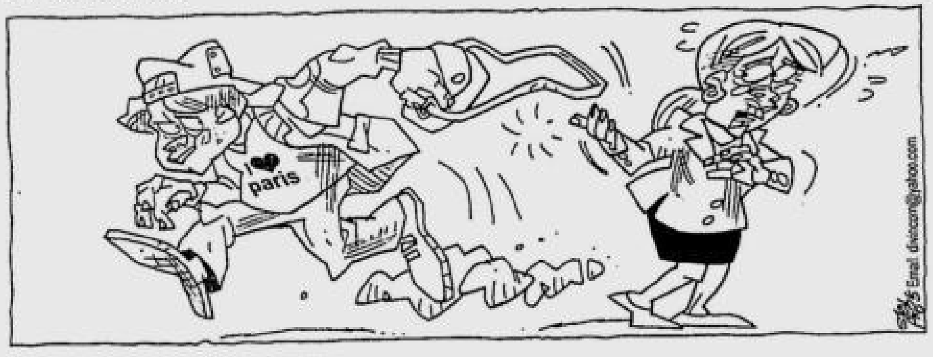
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WeBoy, I DON't Feel So WeLL I tHiNK SoMeTHiNG's WRoNG WitH Me.
UMM...HAVe YOU LooKeD At YouRSeLF iN THe MiRRoR LAteLY?
WeBoy! THiS ISN't the TiMe FoR Me to Be VAiN!
AUUGH! WHY Do I FeeL LiKe I'M ALWAYS CATCHiNG THe WiND?!!

DIVINE COMEDY

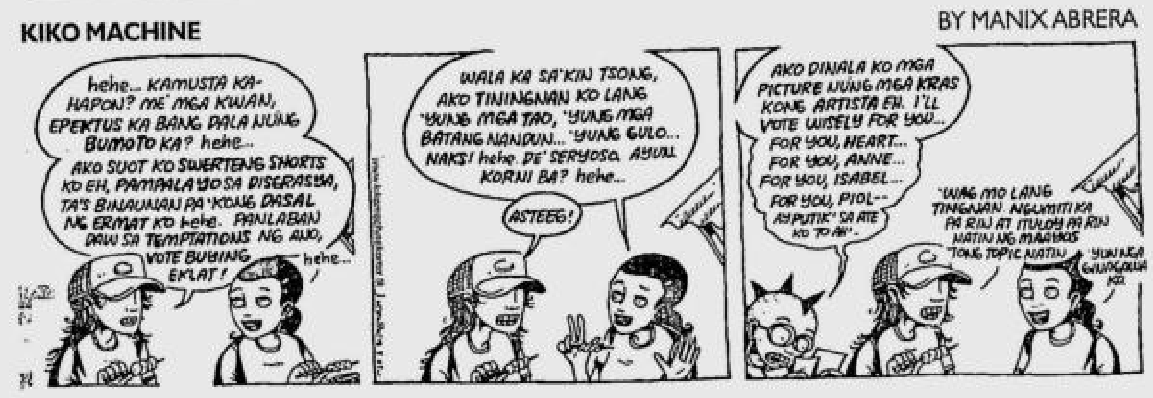
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


paris
Email: divincom@yahoo.com

JAILTIME IS GOOD TIME WHEN YOUR CELL-MATE IS PARIS HILTON

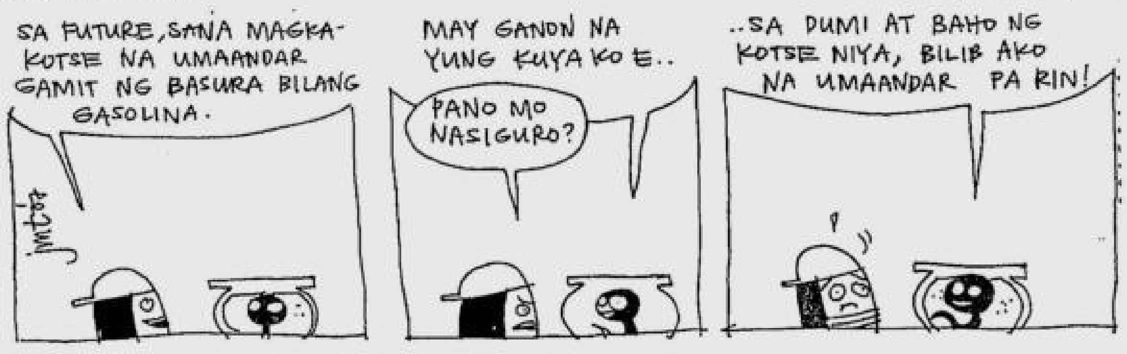
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hehe... KAMUSTA KA-HAPON? ME' MGA KWAN, EPEKTUS KA BANG DALA NUNG BUMOTO KA? hehe...
AKO SUOT KO SWERTENG SHORTS KO EH, PAMPALAYO SA DISGRASYA, TA'S BINAUNAN PA 'KONG DASAL NG ERMAT KO hehe. PANLABAN DAW SA TEMPTATIONS NG AVO, VOTE BUYING EKLAT!
hehe...
WALA KA SA'KIN TSONG, AKO TININGNAN KO LANG 'YUNG MGA TAO, 'YUNG MGA BATANG NANDUN... 'YUNG GULO... NAKS! hehe. DE' SERYOSO. AYUN. KORNI BA? hehe...
ASTEEG!
AKO DINALA KO MGA PICTURE NUNG MGA KRAS KONG ARTISTA EH. I'LL VOTE WISELY FOR YOU... FOR YOU, HEART... FOR YOU, ANNE... FOR YOU, ISABEL... FOR YOU, PIOL-- AY PUTIK' SA ATE KO TO AH'.
'WAG MO LANG TINGNAN. NGUMITI KA PA RIN AT ITULOY PA RIN NATIN NG MAAYOS 'TONG TOPIC NATIN
YUN NGA GINAGAWA KO.

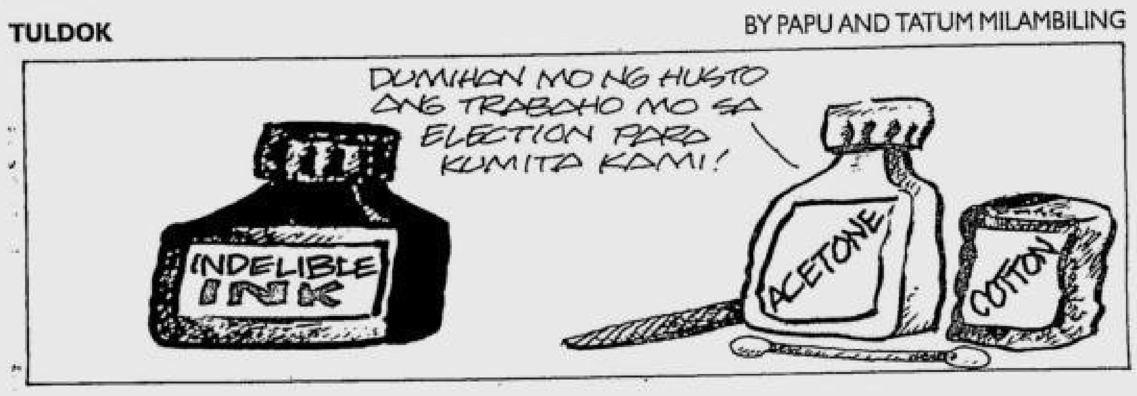
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SA FUTURE, SANA MAGKA-KOTSE NA UMAANDAR GAMIT NG BASURA BILANG GASOLINA.
jmtejido
MAY GANON NA YUNG KUYA KO E..
PANO MO NASIGURO?
..SA DUMI AT BAHO NG KOTSE NIYA, BILIB AKO NA UMAANDAR PA RIN!

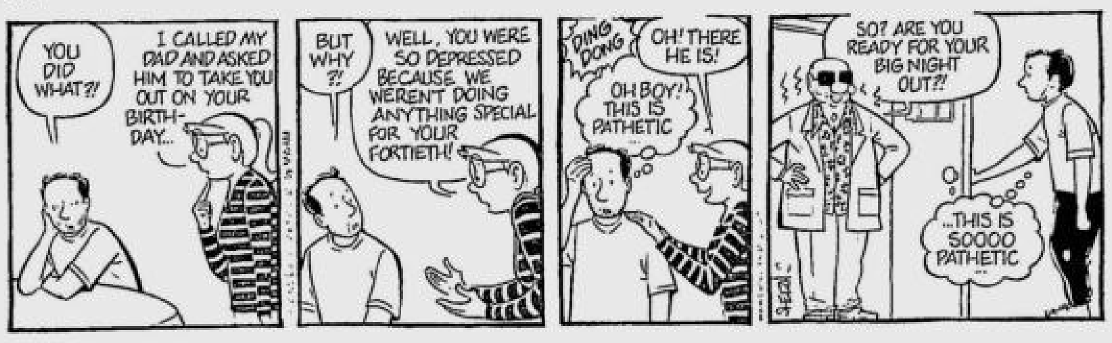
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

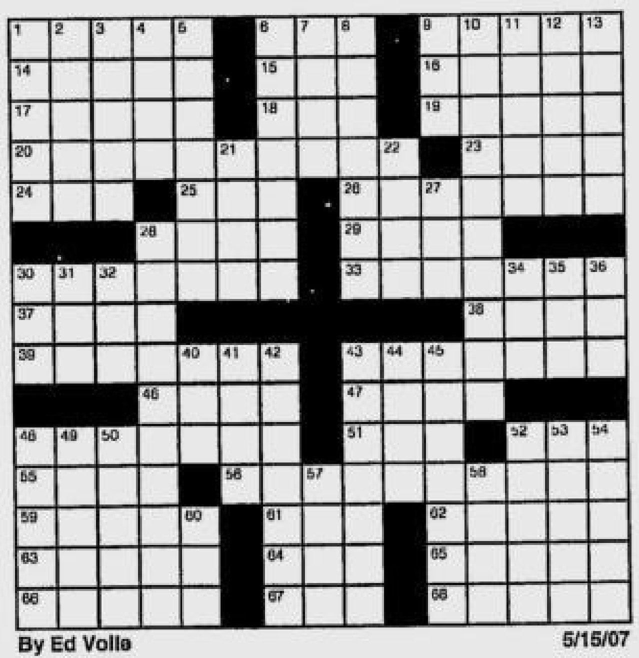

DUMIHON MO NG HUSTO ANG TRABAHO MO SA ELECTION PARA KUMITA KAMI!
INDELIBLE INK
ACETONE
COTTON

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


YOU DID WHAT?!
I CALLED MY DAD AND ASKED HIM TO TAKE YOU OUT ON YOUR BIRTH-DAY...
BUT WHY ?!
WELL, YOU WERE SO DEPRESSED BECAUSE WE WEREN'T DOING ANYTHING SPECIAL FOR YOUR FORTIETH!
DING DONG
OH! THERE HE IS!
OH BOY! THIS IS PATHETIC
SO? ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR BIG NIGHT OUT?!
...THIS IS SOOOO PATHETIC...

DAILY CROSSWORD


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16
17 18 19
20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27
28 29
30 31 32 33 34 35 36
37 38
39 40 41 42 43 44 45
46 47
48 49 50 51 52 53 54
55 56 57 58
59 60 61 62
63 64 65
66 67 68

By Ed Voile
Gillette, WY

5/15/07

ACROSS

1 Decorative plant
6 Training room
9 "Ivanhoe" author
14 Tropical vine
15 That girl
16 Sharpener
17 No later than
18 Bladed pole
19 Foe
20 Revise/send
23 Dines
24 Pair
25 Screwball
26 Hit the skids
28 Russo of "Tin Cup"
29 Will VIP
30 Sauntered
33 Dangerous African flies
37 Colonial black cuckoos
38 Hawkeye State
39 Michigan city
43 Evidenced a tendency
46 Peak in Greece
47 Wound superficially
48 Rips into
51 10 of dates
52 Rhea's relative
55 __ mater
56 History/brewed beverages
59 Squeals
61 Waikiki wreath
62 Spry
63 Strong, cotton thread
64 Singer Tillis
65 Also-ran in 2000
66 Chelmsford's county
67 Exist
68 Shade providers

DOWN

1 Twisted sideways
2 Caste member
3 Numerical relationship
4 Motel rental
5 Claptrap!
6 Wrote for someone
7 Uh-huh
8 Perfect gent
9 Thar __ blows!
10 Prisoners/bell sound
11 A point ahead
12 Pace
13 Secret meeting
21 Magic charm
22 Edgar Allan and others
27 Connection
28 Relax/fit
30 Tour guide
31 Lennon's love
32 Transgression of divine law
34 Turf piece
35 Female sheep
36 Dispirited
40 NASA's orbiting outpost
41 Rush letters
42 Indian bean tree
43 Double-cross
44 Anticrime acronym
45 Competitor in a contest
48 Hold for later action
49 Author of "Studies in the Psychology of Sex"
50 Assemble
52 Slur over
53 Confused skirmish
54 Exploiters
57 Burn a bit
58 Thickening agent
60 Checkbox on a form

Monday's Puzzle Solved

E	W	A	N		T	E	E	T	H		M	I	N	E
N	A	N	A		E	N	E	R	O		E	N	I	D
H	I	G	H	A	N	D	L	O	W		R	A	N	T
A	T	L		G	T	O		U	S	T	I	N	O	V
L	I	E	B	E		R	E	B	O	U	N	D		
O	N	E	A	N	D	A	L	L		B	O	O	Z	Y
			E	D	U		F	E	M			U	S	E
A	T	T	R	A	C	T		S	O	N	A	T	A	S
L	A	O			T	R	U		A	O	L			
A	B	A	C	I		U	P	A	N	D	D	O	W	N
		N	A	S	C	E	N	T		D	O	R	I	A
F	E	D	E	R	A	L		T	I	E		P	D	R
A	R	F	S		N	O	W	A	N	D	T	H	E	N
H	O	R	A		A	V	O	I	D		B	A	L	I
D	O	O	R		L	E	N	N	Y		A	N	Y	A

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5/15/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a magnetism of which you might not even be aware. People are attracted to you. You sometimes exemplify the very qualities that others want in themselves. You're highly imaginative. You have the inner discipline to do your homework for whatever you want to do. This year your focus will be on partnerships and your closest friendships.

Birthdate of: Jamie-Lynn Sigler, actress; Emmitt Smith, quarterback; Ahmet Zappa, actor/musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): For the next month, you'll have more energy, drive and forcefulness in everything you do and say. That's because your ruler, Mars, is now in your own sign.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might be more secretive about your plans in the next few weeks. You don't want someone to know what you're doing. (Is this because you're being private or sly?)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Expect to be much more involved in group sports or group activities in the next month. Others want you to work with them or join in on their fun.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your ambition is definitely aroused! In the next few weeks, go after what you want. Don't hesitate to talk to bosses, VIPs, parents or teachers.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your curiosity to learn more or travel to new places is strong in the next few weeks. However, you'll do more than just be curious—you'll be active about going after what you want to do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Feelings of passion stir your soul! However, romance aside, you might have disputes with others about inheritances or shared property.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You'll have to be more patient and diplomatic than usual in the next few weeks. Mars is now opposing your sign, and this makes you easily irritated with others, especially partners.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have lots of energy to work with. You want to get organized in every aspect of your life. Buy shelving, paint, cleaning equipment, file folders—whatever. Give yourself the tools to do a good job.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Flirtations, romance, vacations and playful activities with children please you in the next few weeks. Many of you will be more involved in sports as well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Increased activity or chaos at home due to renovations or visiting guests tests your patience in the next few weeks. Be tolerant and diplomatic with family members.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your ability to influence, persuade, teach or convince others is excellent in the month ahead. Use this to your best advantage.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might be on a spending spree in the next few weeks. You're certainly going to work harder to earn money as well as spend it!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

			5		3			8
		4		2		7		
	8						4	
6			4		7			2
	3			6			9	
4			2		1			3
	4						7	
		9		5		6		
8			1		6			

Difficulty Level ★★

5/15

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	5	8	4	2	7	3	6	1
6	7	1	5	8	3	2	9	4
3	2	4	9	1	6	5	8	7
1	8	2	3	7	4	9	5	6
7	3	5	6	9	2	1	4	8
4	9	6	8	5	1	7	2	3
5	6	9	1	3	8	4	7	2
2	4	3	7	6	5	8	1	9
8	1	7	2	4	9	6	3	5

Difficulty Level ★

No formal announcements needed about Ogie-Regine relationship

NOW SHOWING
BRILLANTE MENDOZA'S
MANORO
the aeta teacher
Are you VOTING with a CONSCIENCE?
Witness the story of a 13-year old Aeta who teaches her fellow Aetas how to read and write to enable them to vote!
Winner, Best Film and Best Director
Cinemanila International Film Festival
Official Selection, Nantes International Film Festival
May 9 to 15!
Exclusive @ IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria!

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

No doubt they're in it for the long haul

IT'S NOT MY INTENTION TO PREEMPT THE exclusive magazine interview of Ogie Alcasid which will be out in June. But I can no longer ignore the clamor for the real score between Regine Velasquez and Ogie.

I texted him about it. He replied: "Sorry, my dear. I promised exclusivity. By June, I can grant other interviews *na*. Thanks for understanding."

Out of respect for our friendship, I quit badgering him. Speculations about this romance have lingered way too long. It's been like an open secret in the biz, anyway. In their concerts and TV shows, they are inevitably teased by co-hosts and guests. They even ventured into a business together (Indimusic). It's a sure sign that they're in it for the long haul. I've also seen them in unguarded moments—for example, at Pops Fernandez's birthday bash. They are in love, no doubt.

I never asked Ogie pointblank. I've always believed that between good friends, explanations are unnecessary. Some questions are better left unasked and some answers are better left unquestioned.

Annulment

A mutual friend confirmed, "In the process *na ang* annulment *ni* Ogie and Michelle (Van Eimeren)." As a separated woman myself, I know what it's like to go through annulment. It's a delicate period. Anyone you meet could be blamed as the cause of the breakup when the truth is, he/she is just the effect.

Ogie's many love songs/compositions show how sensitive he is. For sure, when his gentle heart made a major decision, it was for the benefit of all concerned. Ogie is such a caring friend; what more as a father? Australia, where his kids are, will always be his second home.

No more encore for Ogie and Michelle. Hopefully, Ogie and Regine will have no finale.

Text joke

Got this text joke about the Ruffa-Ylmaz split up: Ruffa and Ylmaz to file for annullment due to "differences in culture." Yilmaz couldn't understand Annabelle's language.

Feedback

Kris Aquino is such a drama queen! She's making a big deal out of the "ordeal" she went through giving birth. Being in the medical field and having given birth twice, I can say they're what she experienced was not all that unusual. Blood transfusion is really needed when you lose a lot of blood during surgery. Bruises due to blood draws are normal. Difficult processes, yes, but not nearly as life-endangering as Kris describes them.

If her health had really been at risk, she couldn't have attended the press con of Noynoy just two weeks after she gave birth. But of course, she couldn't stay away from the limelight.

Other women give birth in the barrios with just a midwife to assist them. Kris had the best doctors in a private room 24/7. She has no reason to whine. She should stop acting more infantile than her kids. *—Virgie de los Santos, Quezon City*

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

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Served 7:00 am daily.
Treat yourself to a new breakfast experience with our discount coupons.

before ~~P59~~ now P54
Triple Chocolate Champorado
- Valid for dine-in at Max's breakfast stores.
- Not valid in conjunction with other promos and discounts.
- Valid from 7am-10am only.
- Coupon must be presented upon ordering to avail discount.
- Promo valid beginning May 3 to June 30, 2007.
- One (1) coupon per transaction.

Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 1653, series of 2007
Max's

before ~~P120~~ now P99
Pepperoni or Vegetable Omelet
- Valid for dine-in at Max's breakfast stores.
- Not valid in conjunction with other promos and discounts.
- Valid from 7am-10am only.
- Coupon must be presented upon ordering to avail discount.
- Promo valid beginning May 3 to June 30, 2007.
- One (1) coupon per transaction.

Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 1653, series of 2007
Max's

before ~~P120~~ now P109
Max's Tocino
- Valid for dine-in at Max's breakfast stores.
- Not valid in conjunction with other promos and discounts.
- Valid from 7am-10am only.
- Coupon must be presented upon ordering to avail discount.
- Promo valid beginning May 3 to June 30, 2007.
- One (1) coupon per transaction.

Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 1653, series of 2007
Max's

before ~~P120~~ now P109
Chicken Longganisa
- Valid for dine-in at Max's breakfast stores.
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- Valid from 7am-10am only.
- Coupon must be presented upon ordering to avail discount.
- Promo valid beginning May 3 to June 30, 2007.
- One (1) coupon per transaction.

Per DTI-NCR Permit no.1653, series of 2007
Max's

before ~~P120~~ now P109
Adobo Flakes
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- Valid from 7am-10am only.
- Coupon must be presented upon ordering to avail discount.
- Promo valid beginning May 3 to June 30, 2007.
- One (1) coupon per transaction.

Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 1653, series of 2007
Max's

before ~~P150~~ now P139
Max's Sausage
- Valid for dine-in at Max's breakfast stores.
- Not valid in conjunction with other promos and discounts.
- Valid from 7am-10am only.
- Coupon must be presented upon ordering to avail discount.
- Promo valid beginning May 3 to June 30, 2007.
- One (1) coupon per transaction.

Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 1653, series of 2007
Max's

before ~~P155~~ now P149
Max's Tapa
- Valid for dine-in at Max's breakfast stores.
- Not valid in conjunction with other promos and discounts.
- Valid from 7am-10am only.
- Coupon must be presented upon ordering to avail discount.
- Promo valid beginning May 3 to June 30, 2007.
- One (1) coupon per transaction.

Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 1653, series of 2007
Max's

before ~~P155~~ now P149
Boneless Bangus
- Valid for dine-in at Max's breakfast stores.
- Not valid in conjunction with other promos and discounts.
- Valid from 7am-10am only.
- Coupon must be presented upon ordering to avail discount.
- Promo valid beginning May 3 to June 30, 2007.
- One (1) coupon per transaction.

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AMERICA's MOST TALKED-ABOUT MOVIE!

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---Pete Hammond, Maxim

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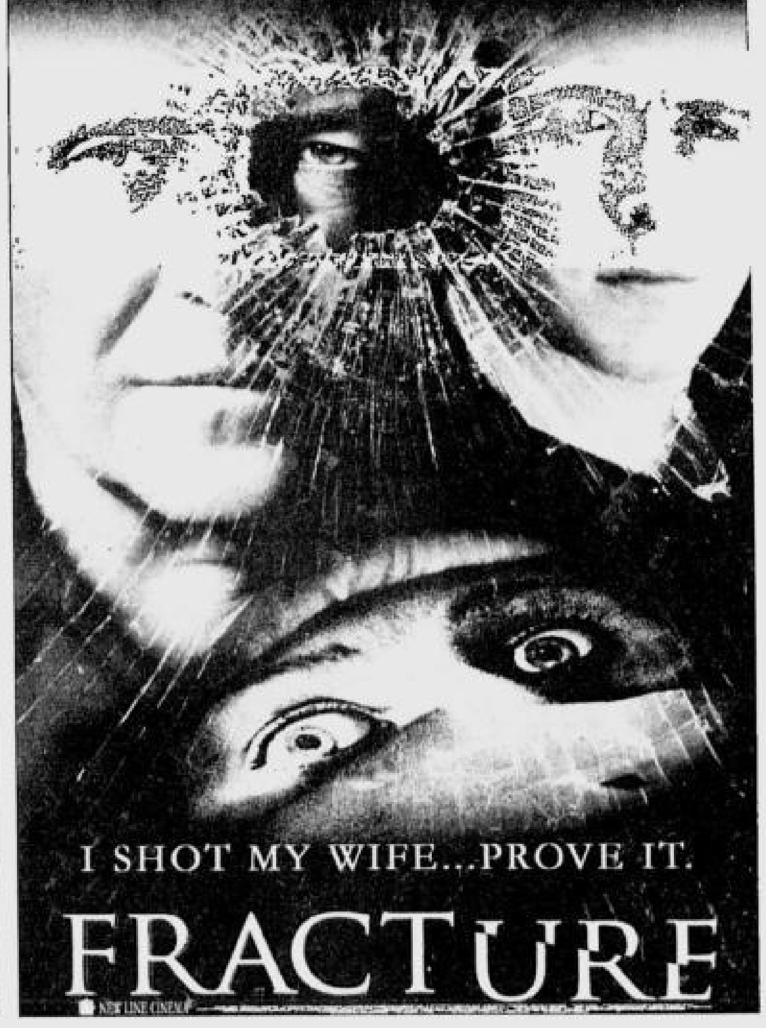
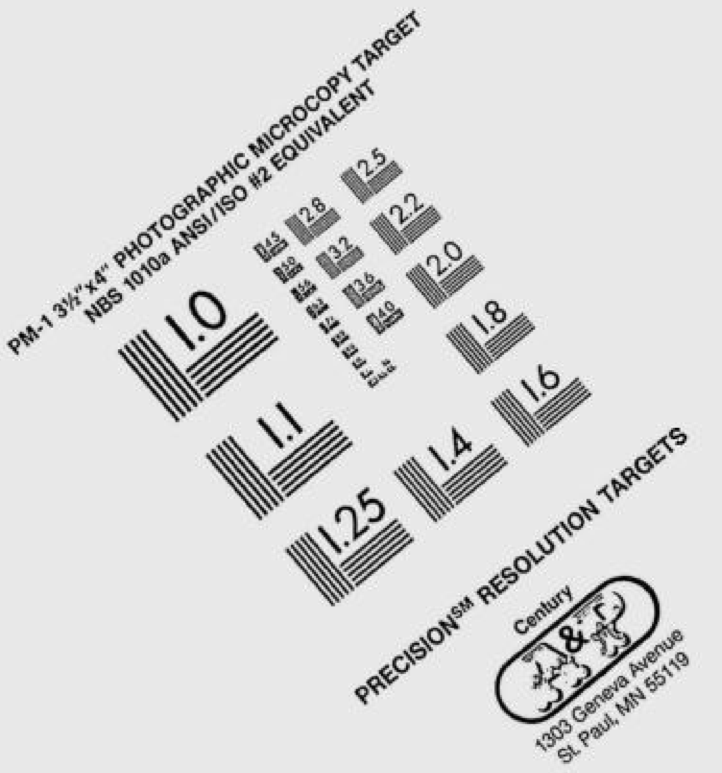
---Claudia Puig, USA Today

"AN EXCEPTIONALLY SUSPENSEFUL NAIL-BITER!"
---Rex Reed, New York Observer

HOW DO YOU CONVICT A MAN WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN PROVEN INNOCENT?
ANTHONY HOPKINS RYAN GOSLING


I SHOT MY WIFE...PROVE IT.
FRACTURE
NEW LINE CINEMA

MTRCB RATING G FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE
THE LONG WAIT IS OGRE
DREAMWORKS
SHREK 3
CATCH THE SPECIAL PREVIEW ON MAY 16 (WED) AND MAY 17 (THUR) AT YOUR FAVORITE THEATERS
IN THEATERS MAY 18
DreamWorks Animation SKG
PDI
shrek.com
Solar Entertainment Corporation


PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT
PRECISION℠ RESOLUTION TARGETS
Century
1303 Geneva Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55119

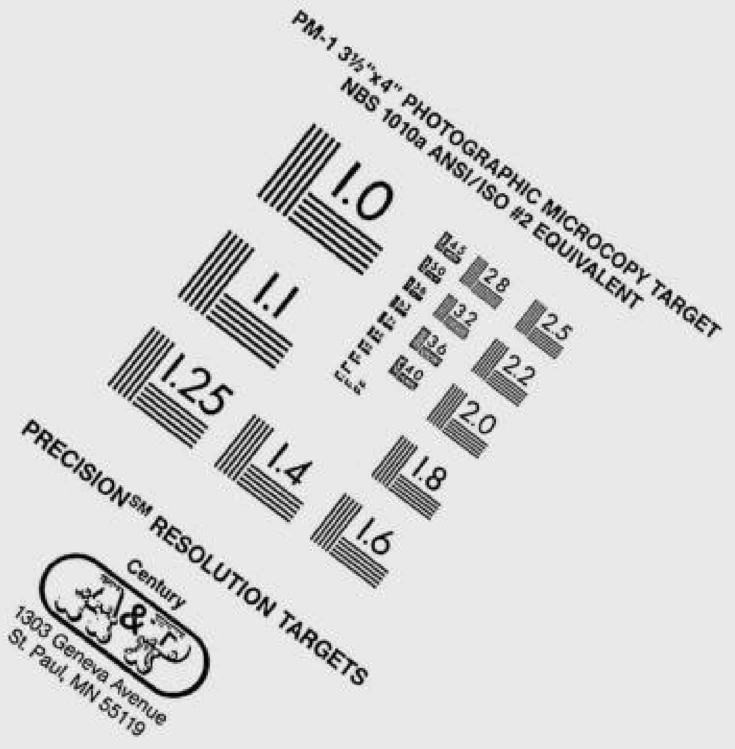
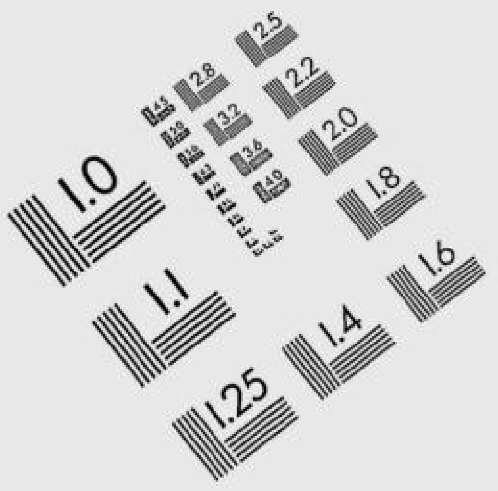
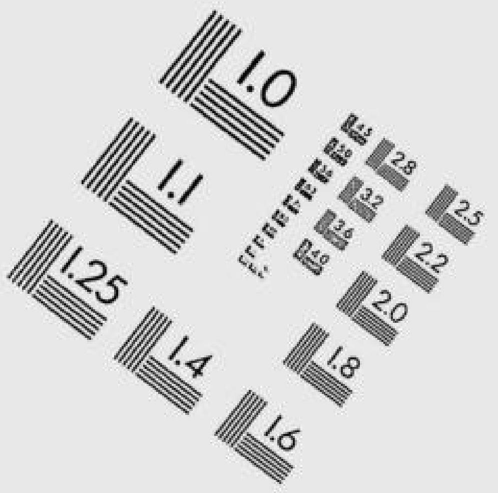
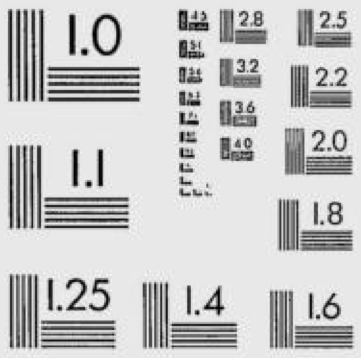

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT
PRECISION℠ RESOLUTION TARGETS
Century
1303 Geneva Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55119

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)






1.0
1.1
1.25
1.4
1.6
1.8
2.0
2.2
2.5
2.8
3.2
3.6
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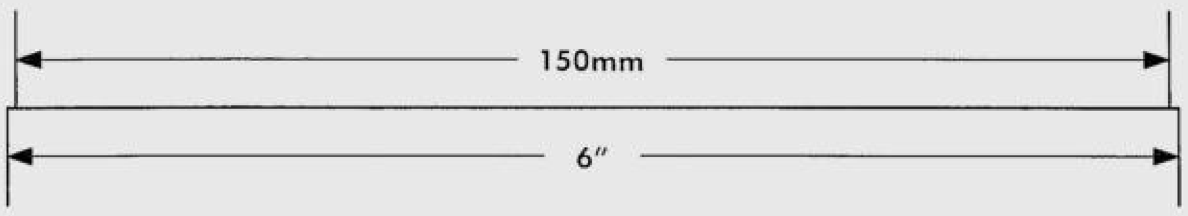

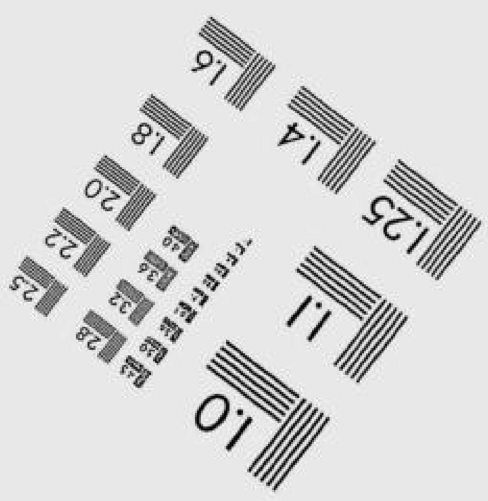

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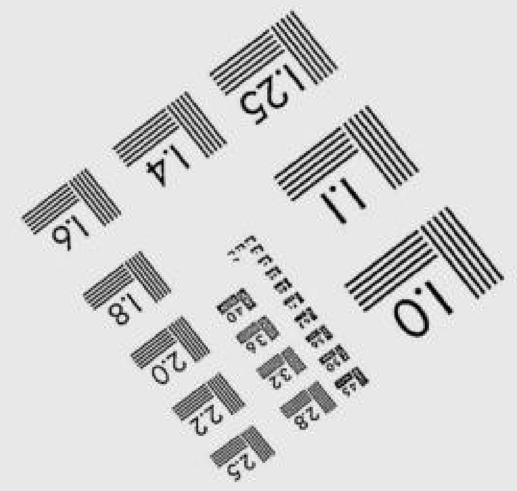

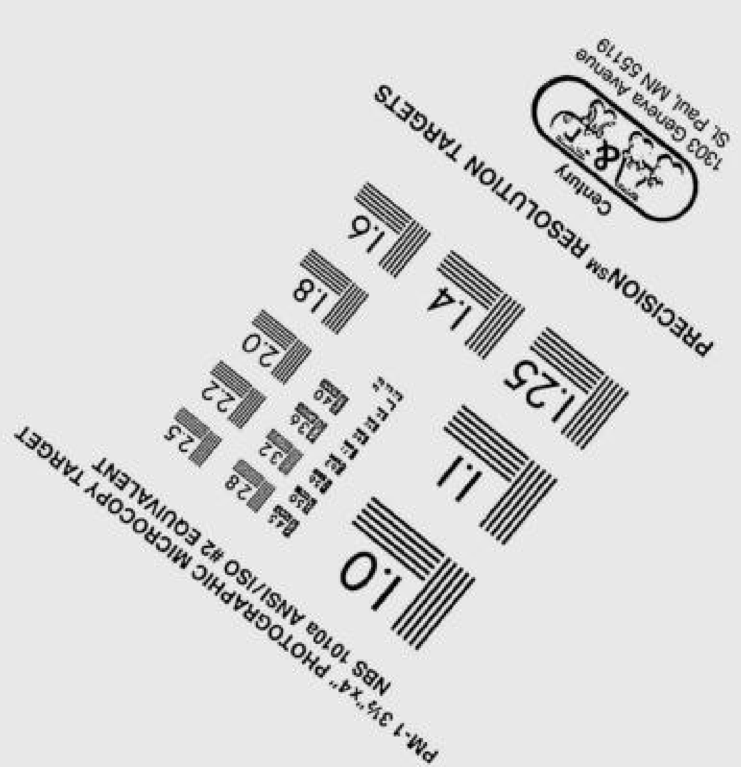
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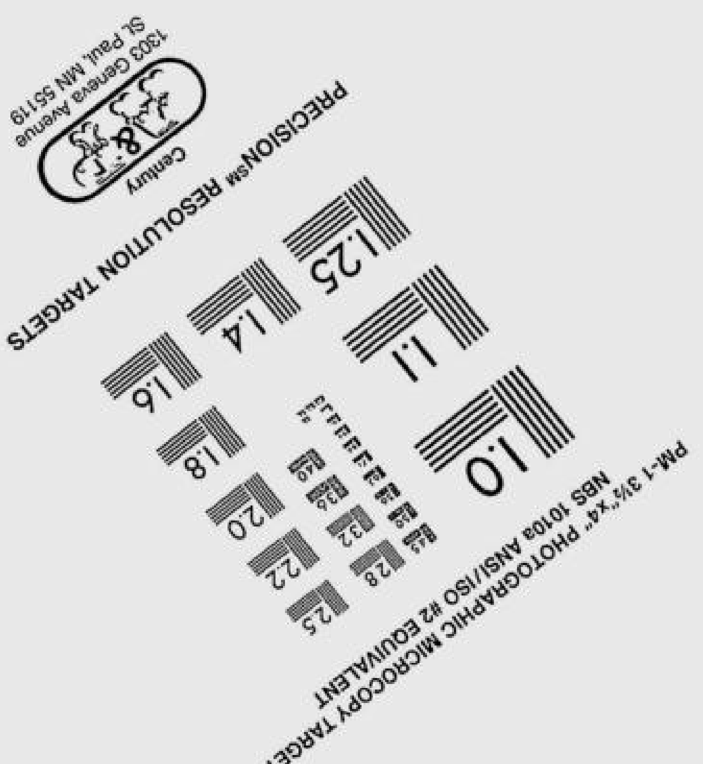
St. Paul, MN 55119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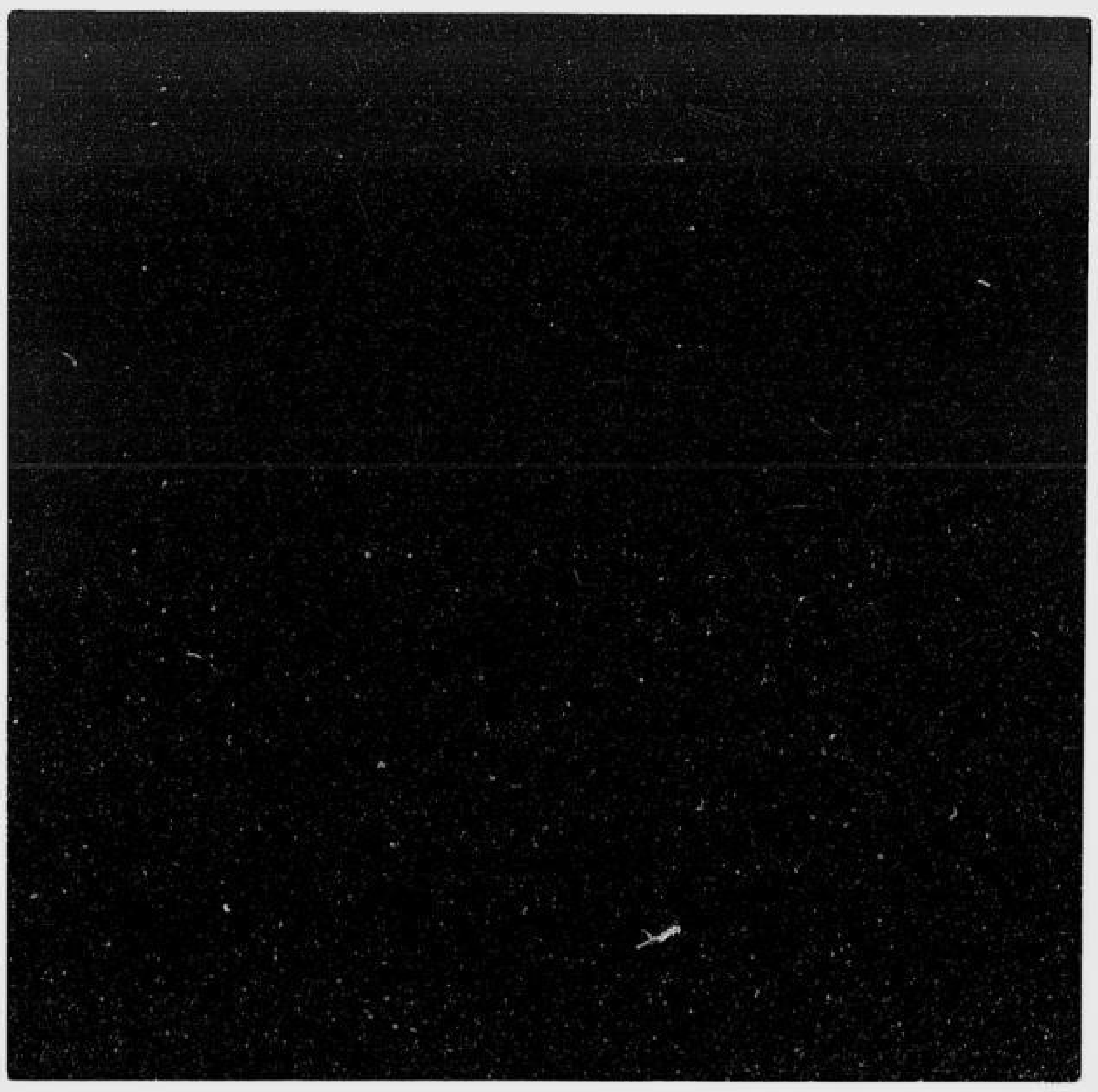

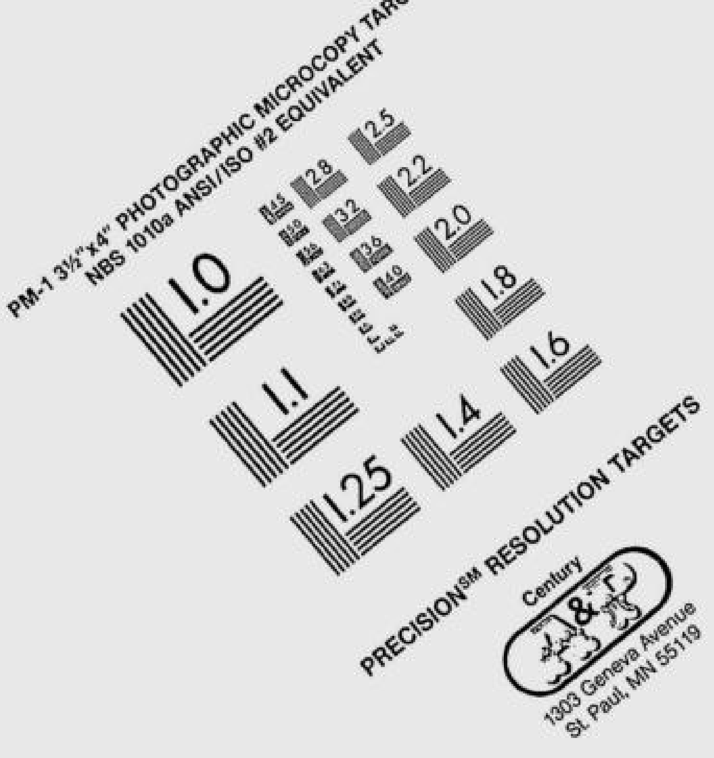
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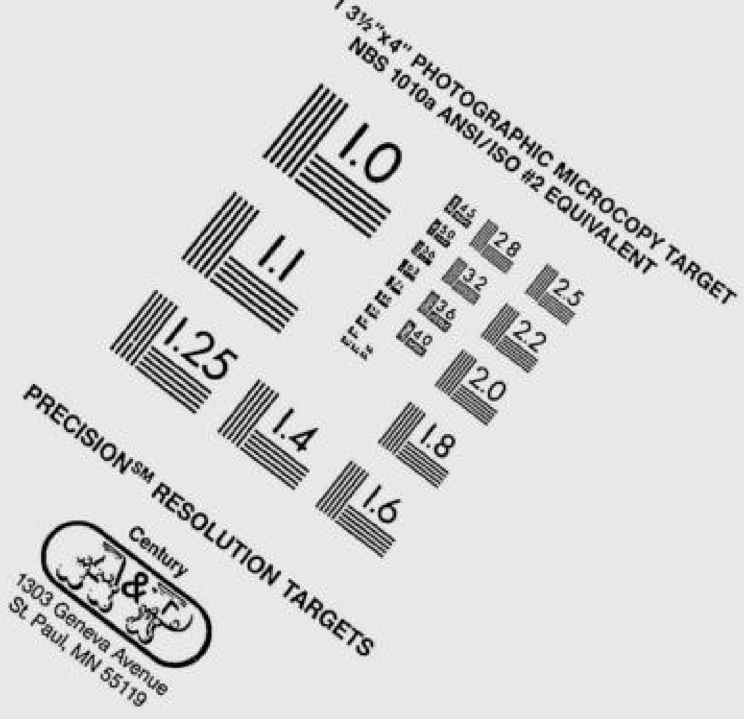
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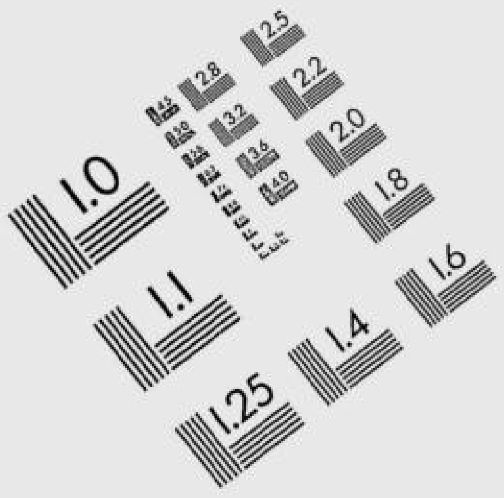

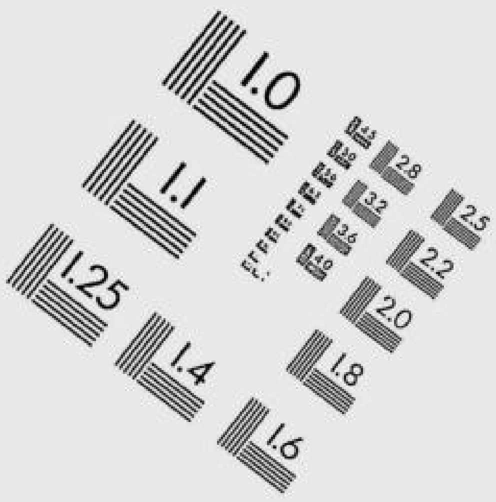

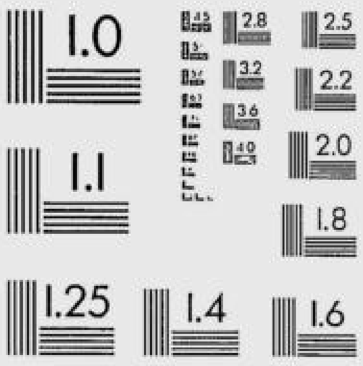
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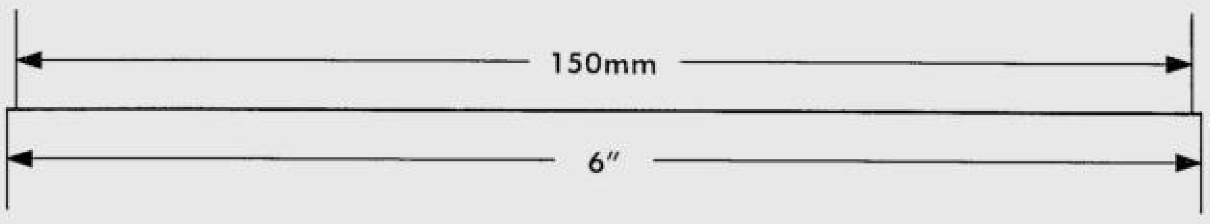

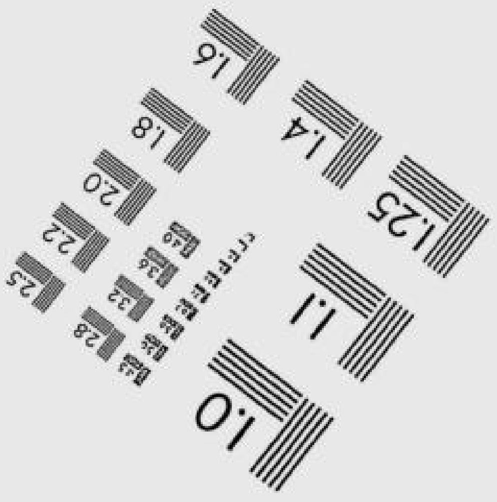

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